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PROGRESSIVE SCHOLASTICISM

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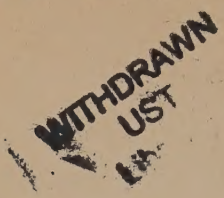

PROGRESSIVE SCHOLASTICISM

BY

GERARDO BRUNI, PH.D.

AUTHORIZED TRANSLATION FROM THE ITALIAN

BY

JOHN S. ZYBURA, PH.D.

Author of "Present-Day Thinkers and the New Scholasticism," etc.

A CONTRIBUTION TO THE COMMEMORATION OF THE FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ENCYCLICAL *"AETERNI PATRIS"*

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TO

THE RIGHT REVEREND JOSEPH SCHREMBS, D.D.

BISHOP OF CLEVELAND

BY HIS EXCEPTIONAL GIFTS OF MIND AND HEART

THE ENLIGHTENED AND ZEALOUS LEADER

OF HIS PRIESTS AND HIS PEOPLE

IN ALL RELIGIOUS, EDUCATIONAL, CHARITABLE, CIVIC ACTIVITIES

AS A SMALL TOKEN

OF VENERATION AND GRATITUDE

THIS WORK

IS RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED

BY

THE AUTHORS

12425

TRANSLATOR'S FOREWORD

I

According to the philosophies of "perpetual flux" or "absolute relativism," we must eternally recommence the solution of the great riddles of nature and of man. Penelope-like, we must undo the work already finished, and begin to weave anew the texture of philosophic thought, only to have it unraveled again by our successors.

But, *est perennis quaedam philosophia,* said Leibniz [1] who, in the opinion of Gierke, "in so many directions went deeper than his contemporaries, and who, perhaps for that reason, so often turned his eyes backward towards medieval ways of thought." [2]

We must, wrote Trendelenburg [3] over fifty years

[1] *Philosophische Schriften* (ed. Gerhardt, 1887), Vol. III, p. 424. He appropriated the phrase from Augustinus Steuchus Eugubinus, whose work *De Perenni Philosophia* was first published at Lyons in 1540.

[2] E. Barker, in *Mediaeval Contributions to Modern Civilization* (London, 1921), p. 5.

[3] A. Trendelenburg, *Logische Untersuchungen* (Berlin, 1870), I, ix. Cfr. C. Mazzantini, *Filosofia Nuova o Filosofia Perenne?* in *Rivista di Filosofia Neo-Scolastica* (March-June, 1926), pp. 125–139; O. Willmann, *Aus der Werkstatt der Philosophia Perennis* (Freiburg im Breisgau, 1912); *Geschichte*

ago, abandon the prejudice that a newly formulated principle has yet to be discovered for the philosophy of the future. The principle is found: it lies in the organic world-view grounded in Plato and Aristotle, propagating itself from them, developing, fashioning, and gradually perfecting itself by a more profound investigation of the fundamental ideas and particular aspects, as well as by a reciprocal action with the various positive sciences.

The New Scholasticism, like the old, is inspired by this ideal of a perennial philosophy: it aims to represent most comprehensively this fund of deathless philosophic doctrines, and progressively to enrich it by all the new conquests of the human mind. It claims to possess the principle mentioned by Trendelenburg in "that profound system of metaphysics, such as it was founded by Plato and Aristotle, fashioned in the Christian spirit by Patristic thought, rounded off by medieval Scholasticism, particularly in the imperishably lucid form and logical elaboration given it in the light of first principles by St. Thomas Aquinas, accepted in its essential traits by Leibniz as the *philosophia perennis.* Surely, this system can and must be continued and further developed, enriched, thoroughly secured and poised on its foundations,—especially in its theory of knowledge,[4]—maintained in progressive relation with

des Idealismus (Braunschweig, 1907); Engert, *Ueber den Gedanken einer Philosophia Perennis,* in *Philosophisches Jahrbuch der Görres-Gesellschaft,* Vol. 39, No. 2 (1926), pp. 105–127.

[4] Cfr. J. H. Ryan, *The Approach to the Problem of Knowl-*

the advances of empirical science; but it cannot without detriment be abandoned as to its groundwork and leading propositions." [5] It is with this soul of perennial truth, as found in the great body of Greek and Scholastic thought, restored, rethought, and restated for our own day, that Neo-Scholastics aim to vivify, permeate, unify, and organize the conquests of modern and contemporaneous philosophy and science.

Precisely because of the ideal which the New Scholasticism aspires to realize, it must be at once cautiously conservative and prudently progressive. While embracing and guarding the immortal truths and tested standards of the past, it must be quick to appreciate, prompt to appropriate, ready to assimilate whatsoever proves itself true in the present or the future: it must warmly welcome the *spolia Aegyptiorum* and look everywhere for the "seeds of the Logos." Its normal condition is not the rigidity of a corpse, but the suppleness of a living organism—not only assimilating the wholesome nourishment of new truths, but also eliminating the waste matter of dead ideas and outworn theories. Its perennial character consists not only in its unswerving loyalty to immutable truths, but also in its undiminished capacity for continual renewal. Mindful of the indefinite perfectibility of human expressions of the truth, it regards the task of philosophy as never

edge, in *The New Scholasticism* (1928), Vol. II, No. 1, p. 18 sq.

[5] Cl. Baeumker, *Philosophische Welt- und Lebensanschauung, in Deutschland und der Katholizismus* (Freiburg im Breisgau, 1918), I, p. 69.

finished: *opus philosophicum semper perfectibile.* Its very life depends on this twofold process of conservation and renovation.

Hence it will be stamped with *universality*: it is not the philosophy of one race, nation, or period, but the constantly progressing philosophy of mankind; hence it will also have *continuity.* It will always be marked by *modernity,* not only because truth is always modern, but also because it hospitably receives the new whenever it is true. Then, too, is not Scholastic thought of the very warp and woof of the Western mind? Its spirit and splendid mental discipline fashioned, and left their lasting impress upon, the soul of the leading modern nations. The modern world lives and thrives on the rich heritage of the past: what is best in it in the spiritual, intellectual, artistic, and political spheres, is a patrimony received from the ancient and the medieval world. Because of this affinity, Scholastic thought can readily assimilate what is true, good, and beautiful in modern thought and culture. Moreover, by the witness of a scholar like Gilson,[6] St. Thomas Aquinas, the chief glory of Scholasticism, is the *first of modern philosophers* because to him is due the epochal achievement of having been the first to constitute philosophy in its own right, to give it full consciousness of self,

[6] *In Études de Philosophie Médievale* (Paris, 1921), p. v.—For other authorities see Zybura, *Present-Day Thinkers and the New Scholasticism* (St. Louis & London, second edition, 1927), p. 494. Also, the articles on medieval philosophy by Professor Longwell of Princeton, in the January and May (1928) issues of the *Philosophical Review.*

independence and autonomy, by establishing on fundamental principles the distinction between philosophy and theology, and assigning to each its proper domain and method. Modern philosophy came of age, not in the sixteenth, but in the thirteenth century.

The best Neo-Scholastic minds strongly emphasize all the requisites mentioned above as being of the very essence of a Scholasticism that aims to be progressive and so, by remaining loyal to its best traditions, to escape the tragic fate that befell the older Scholasticism during the period of transition from the medieval to the modern era. To quote a few:

"In attributing to the New Scholasticism, rightly understood, a living development, sound progress, broadness and open-mindedness for the philosophic problems of the present, we are unquestionably thinking and acting in harmony with the mind of St. Thomas. Historical research is bringing out with increasing clearness the fact that for his time St. Thomas was a very modern and progressive philosopher." [7]

"Philosophic thought is not a finished work; it is a living thing, like the mind that conceives it. It is not a sort of shrouded mummy, but an organism ever young and ever active—to be kept alive and nourished by personal effort, so as to assure its unceasing growth." [8]

"Why did the brilliant attempt made in the sixteenth

[7] M. Grabmann, in Zybura, *op. cit.*, p. 149.

[8] Card. D. Mercier, *Le bilan philosophique du XIX siècle*, in *Revue Néo-Scolastique de Philosophie* (1900), p. 327.

century by the Dominicans and Jesuits of Spain and Italy have but a local and ephemeral success? Because the return to the vital sources of the thirteenth century was not accompanied by sufficient interest for contemporaneous movements. Undoubtedly a Suarez or a Lessius discussed the political theories of Protestantism, but the conceptions of a Telesius or a Giordano Bruno, as well as the diatribes of the Humanists, left them indifferent." [9]

"We are *Neo-Scholastics of the twentieth century,* who propose to synthesize into one organic whole the immortal truths of pre-modern thinkers with the contributions made by modern times in the scientific and philosophical investigations of concreteness. Such is our programme, our method, our system." [10]

And yet, despite these unequivocal and forceful avowals, and in the face of the actual advances made toward the realization of these progressive ideals since the encyclical *Aeterni Patris* (1879),[11] many non-Scholastic thinkers stubbornly persist in maintaining

[9] M. De Wulf, in *Revue Néo-Scolastique de Philosophie* (May, 1926), p. 123.

[10] F. Olgiati, in Zybura, *op. cit.,* pp. 299–300.

[11] In Part II of *Present-day Thinkers and the New Scholasticism,* leading Neo-Scholastics of the principal countries explain the progress of the Neo-Scholastic movement since the issuance of the encyclical. To signalize the fiftieth anniversary of the *Aeterni Patris,* the alert editors of our lusty young quarterly, *The New Scholasticism,* will publish a special number in which they follow the same plan, though, of course, on a larger scale.

that Scholastic philosophy ("if it be a philosophy" [12]) cannot be truly progressive; two main reasons are advanced in support of this assertion.

For one thing, its subservience to Catholic dogma restricts or even destroys its freedom. Here is "the stone of stumbling and the rock of offence" for so many non-Scholastics: "Scholastic philosophy is identified with theological dogmas"; "its outcome is determined in advance by the principle of authority"; "Scholastics are not thinking for themselves, nor are they free to follow the argument whithersoever it leads," and so on.[13]

Again, it is alleged that their unhistorical and ultra-conservative attitude toward modern thought and culture incapacitates the Neo-Scholastics for appreciating and assimilating whatever progress philosophy and the sciences have made during the modern era. In fact, it is averred, some Scholastics condemn *en bloc* the last four centuries of human thought.

It is precisely because Dr. Gerardo Bruni's timely work [14] throws new light on these important problems

[12] Professor Longwell's prolonged researches, however, have convinced him that medieval Scholastic philosophy was "the first real achievement of our modern race in its search for rationalized truth." (Cfr. *art. cit.*)

[13] Cfr. Zybura, *op. cit.*, p. 117.

[14] *Riflessioni sulla Scolastica* (Rome, 1927) is the title of the original, which was revised and enlarged by the author for the present English translation. The title *Progressive Scholasticism* was chosen because it indicates more specifically the aim and content of the "Reflections."—Dr. Bruni is not a total stranger to the American public. As assistant librarian

that it was hoped a translation of it would be welcomed by the English-speaking public. His solution of the relations between faith and reason, theology and philosophy, is, of course, the traditional Thomistic one; but his manner of treatment occasionally sets the problem at a new angle and so renders the point at issue clearer. It is to be commended also for the lucid and succinct presentation of the historical background of the problem by marking its successive stages and pointing out how they led to the definitive solution.

"It is an important book," says Dr. James H. Ryan [15] (the newly appointed Rector of the Catholic University of America, Washington, D. C.). "The second portion of the book betrays an originality and an independence of thought not often seen in works of this character . . . Dr. Bruni has faced the problem squarely and honestly. His solution is wise, the only one which will and can triumph. Scholastics and non-Scholastics alike are sure to find the book enlightening and stimulating."

II

The translator takes this opportunity to point out

of the Vatican Library he was a member of the commission sent by the Holy Father to this country to study our library methods, and for the greater part of a year he conducted his researches at Columbia University, New York. Dr. Bruni holds a doctorate in philosophy not only from a Catholic institution, but also from the State University, where he studied modern philosophy under Giovanni Gentile.

[15] In *The New Scholasticism* (1928), Vol. II, No. 1, pp. 80 and 81.

briefly by what means the new Scholasticism is striving to realize its ideals.

The progressive efforts of Neo-Scholastics, that is to say, the work of philosophical and scientific research on the one hand, and that of the assimilation and synthesis of all the truths and values which are found to have a permanent character on the other, is reaching out in four main directions.

First, there is the intensive study of the sources of Scholastic thought in its fundamental and lasting aspects. This study extends to the historical as well as the theoretical side. And so, a deeper and wider investigation is being devoted to Greek philosophy, particularly to the works of Aristotle, *in the original;* for they have an interest of the first rank for the deeper understanding of Scholastic thought.[16] For it will not do to say that the substance of Aristotle may be found in St. Thomas. Because of the many difficulties he had to encounter in getting at the true meaning of much of Aristotle, the critical work of Aquinas on the Stagirite could be neither complete nor definitive.[17] Moreover, "the historical researches of recent years have thoroughly cleared up the ways by which the writings of Aristotle came into Scholasticism, as well

[16] Cfr. the thoughtful article, *Die Antike—ein Hauptquellgebiet der scholastischen Philosophie,* in *Scholastik* (1926), Vol. I, No. 1, pp. 81–104, on the providential mission of Greek philosophy; P. Gény, *Questions d'Enseignement de la Philosophie Scolastique* (Paris, 1913), pp. 203–210; J. Rimaud, *Thomisme et Methode* (Paris, 1925), pp. 28–40.

[17] Gény, *op. cit.,* pp. 207–208.

as the forms taken by the translation, utilization, and evaluation of the Stagirite; they have likewise thrown abundant light on the rôle of Platonism, Neo-Platonism, and Augustinianism in Scholasticism. These historical results of research must be turned to account for the understanding of the content of the Christian Aristotelianism of Albert the Great and particularly of St. Thomas Aquinas." [18] Medieval Scholasticism likewise stands in need of further thorough investigation, and this applies not only to Thomism, but also to the other currents,[19] particularly to the thought of the Franciscan School and to that of the now rehabilitated Duns Scotus.[20] Nor must we over-

[18] M. Grabmann, in Zybura, *op. cit.*, p. 133. Cfr. Prof. Mansion's *Bulletin de Littérature Aristotélique,* in *Revue Néo-Scolastique de Philosophie* (February, 1928), pp. 82–116; also his article on *La Genèse de l'oeuvre d'Aristote,* in the same review for August, 1927, pp. 307–341, and for November, 1927, pp. 423–466.

[19] The rich harvest of the latest researches in this field is to be found in the eleventh revised and enlarged edition of the second volume (*Patristic and Scholastic Philosophy*) of Ueberweg's monumental *Grundriss der Geschichte der Philosophie. Zweiter Teil. Die Patristische und Scholastische Philosophie,* edited by Dr. B. Geyer (Berlin, 1927). The bibliography alone fills 157 closely packed octavo pages.

[20] Cfr. E. Longpré, *La Philosophie du B. Duns Scot* (Paris, 1924); also his article, *Pour la Défense de Duns Scot,* in *Rivista di Filosofia Neo-Scolastica* (January-February 1926), pp. 32–42; in the second edition of Volume I of his work, *Le Point de Départ de la Métaphysique* (Louvain, 1927), Maréchal takes into account the results of the researches made by Longpré and others. As a consequence, he revises in several

look the Nominalism of the fourteenth century [21] nor the important contributions made by the brief but brilliant Scholastic revival of the sixteenth century.

There are some, says Grabmann,[22] who regard as superfluous all researches into the history of Scholasticism, and assume a purely systematic attitude. However, without favoring a one-sided historism, we should keep in mind that the historical investigations of the literature and ideas of medieval Scholasticism are by no means completed; that only one way is open to the clear understanding of the nature and significance of knotty problems in Thomistic thought: the way of historical research into the sources—including the still unpublished works of the predecessors, contemporaries, pupils, and opponents of St. Thomas. It

points his original estimate of the epistemology of Duns Scotus. Cfr. also the important article "De Vita et Operibus B. Joannis Duns Scoti juxta Litteraturam Ultimi Decennii", by P. Stephanus Simonis, O. F. M., in *Antonianum,* Vol. III, No. 4, (Rome, Oct., 1928), pp. 451–484. C. R. S. Harris, *Duns Scotus,* 2 vols. (Oxford, 1927). Opinions differ as to the merits of this latter work.

[21] Its importance is exemplified in a recent work by A. Tellkamp, *Das Verhältnis John Lockes zur Scholastik* (Münster, 1927), which shows that Locke was deeply influenced by the decadent nominalistic current of Scholasticism.

[22] M. Grabmann, *Kulturphilosophie des hl. Thomas von Aquin* (Augsburg, 1925), pp. 186 sq. Cfr. also his pamphlet on *Der Gegenwartswert der geschichtlichen Erforschung der mittelalterlichen Philosophie* (Vienna and Freiburg im Breisgau, 1913); and his work on *Thomas von Aquin* (Munich, 5th ed., 1926), pp. 159 sqq.

was precisely through such historical investigations, instituted by Denifle, Cardinal Ehrle, Baeumker, and others, that medieval Scholasticism began to be more justly appraised and duly appreciated also in non-Scholastic circles.[23] Nor should we forget that a deeper insight into the mutual relations between medieval philosophy and theology on the one hand, and all phases of medieval culture on the other, is not merely of historical interest, but is also very instructive for a proper understanding of the modern mind, and therefore valuable in more than one respect for purposes of systematization.

Baeumker [24] likewise keenly realized the systematic value of these philosophical-historical researches. Not that we are to regard philosophy as wholly resolvable into history, or the latter as existing exclusively for the sake of the philosophical system. History possesses a value of its own as the mind's historical unfoldment in which, as in all living development, the past is immanently retained in the present, and renders impossible an absolute breach with the past without the severance of life's continuity. But precisely on this account historical researches have a meaning and abiding value also for philosophic thought and systematization. And this for two reasons. In the first place, the significant thoughts of the great masters,

[23] We have the recent example of Professor Longwell in the articles cited above.

[24] In *Philosophie der Gegenwart in Selbstdarstellungen* (Leipzig, 1923), II pp. 31 sqq.

the conquests of earnest inquirers, the constructive elements for a *philosophia perennis,* are by this means preserved in a state of vital, creative fertility. Secondly, this enlightened historical standpoint, by its comparative method, by imparting a sense of the complexity of philosophic problems, by engendering a solicitude for precision in regard to details, proves to be the best critical corrective of the authoritarian bias, blind faith, unhistorical attitudes, unreasonable antagonisms, premature generalizations, and shallow or false syntheses. The danger of the latter is more real for the Scholastic because the solid metaphysical groundwork of his philosophy tends to make him over-confident.

It is this same viewpoint which teaches us that even the most precious achievements must be understood as historically conditioned. It is a remedy against a merely slavish reiteration of the past, and keeps the eye steadily fixed on the real problems. Systematic philosophical thought must be fructified by historical research: the speculative effort, looking the great problems of the day squarely in the face, must be combined with that historical investigation which seeks to see and understand the philosophical problems in their making, in their origin and unfoldment in the course of time.

This brings us to the second momentous task which the Neo-Scholastic seeks to perform in his progressive strivings: a thorough and comprehensive study of all systems of modern philosophy and all phases of modern culture, so as to get at their histori-

cal significance, to discover whatever of the *philosophia perennis* they embody. This the Neo-Scholastic is obliged to do if he is to remain loyal to the basic principles of his own metaphysics. It is true that the Scholastic *system* became decadent and lost its influence during the transitional period, but the immortal *truths* of Scholasticism went marching on: like all truth, they were "fated not to die." Hence Scholasticism, as the perennial philosophy, must seek and find itself in whatever is true in every system of modern thought and in every aspect of modern culture. "Let us be persuaded that we [Scholastics] are not the sole possessors of the truth, and that the truth we do possess is not the whole truth."[25] But as Dr. Bruni devotes special attention to this point in the second part of his book, it is not necessary to dwell on it here.[26]

[25] Cardinal Mercier, *art. cit.* (in our note 8), p. 328.

[26] In fulfilling this second task, the orientations of the Neo-Scholastic schools of Louvain and Milan are by no means contrary to, but rather complementary of, each other. For discussions of this topic, see *Revue Néo-Scolastique de Philosophie* (November, 1912: Gemelli's viewpoint, pp. 549 sq.; De Wulf's reply, pp. 555 sq.); *Revue de Philosophie* (January, 1913), pp. 46–56; *Rivista di Filosofia Neoscolastica* for April, 1919, pp. 101–109; for January, 1925, pp. 23–39; for January, 1926, pp. 56–62; for July, 1927, pp. 367–380; in the November, 1927 issue, pp. 444–458, Dr. Olgiati, while warmly commending the first part of Dr. Bruni's book, takes exception to some statements in the second part (unrevised edition). Without naming his critic, Dr. Bruni answers him briefly toward the conclusion of the second part of this revised edition. A more detailed reply is to appear in an early issue of the same *Rivista*.

The third main effort of the progressive Neo-Scholastics is being directed to devoting due attention to the important rôle played by the positive sciences in the development of philosophic thought.[27] They constantly keep in mind the eminently positive character of Peripatetic Scholasticism (its theory of knowledge), and seek to maintain continuous contact with reality, not only by means of ordinary empirical knowledge, but also by scientific observation and experiment. Always keeping abreast of the progress of the sciences, they utilize the established results of the latter in their philosophical elaborations. For they know full well that the progress of philosophy depends on the harmonious combination and constant co-operation of the inductive and deductive methods.

The fundamental principle—grounded in the very nature of the human mind and of its cognitive processes—for the proper distinction (not separation in watertight compartments, or identification) between philosophy and science, as well as for the continuity necessarily existing between them, was established by Aristotle,[28] and followed by the medieval Scholastics.[29] The

[27] Cfr. Gény, *op. cit.*, pp. 111–146; O. Habert, *Le Primat de l'Intelligence* (Paris, 1926), pp. 38–90; R. G. Bandas, *Science and Philosophy,* in *Proceedings of the Third Annual Meeting of the American Catholic Philosophical Association,* pp. 75–89.

[28] Cfr. C. Sentroul, *Kant et Aristote* (Louvain and Paris, 1913), pp. VII, 289–321; J. Maréchal, *Le Point de Départ de la Métaphysique* (Bruges and Paris, 1922), Vol. I, pp. 43 sqq.

[29] Maréchal, *op. cit.*, pp. 69 sqq.; Gény, *op. cit.*, pp. 131–136;

unnatural separation of scientific from common knowledge, as well as the divorce of science from philosophy, had their beginnings in that period of unparalleled progress in the sciences of observation, the sixteenth century and after. The idolatry of science originated, on the one hand, in the reaction against the pseudo-metaphysical excesses of the first half of the nineteenth century, resulting in distrust and contempt for all metaphysics and in the well nigh total loss of the metaphysical sense; on the other, in the marvelous development of the positive sciences which began its triumphant course with the second half of the last

Grabmann, *Die Kulturphilosophie des hl. Thomas von Aquin* (Augsburg, 1925), pp. 129–130; *Revue Néo-Scolastique de Philosophie* (May, 1926), pp. 112–114.—Cfr. A. E. Taylor's view in *Recent Developments in European Thought* (Oxford, 1921), pp. 26 sqq.—We need to develop the philosophy of science. Uncertainty and confusion exist among philosophers and scientists as to the nature and division of the sciences. "Science," says Santayana (in Zybura, *op. cit.*, p. 74), "which many supposed had superseded all speculative philosophy, has itself now become obscure and dubious in its foundations."—Cfr. E. De Bruyne, *A propos de la définition et la division des sciences,* in *Revue Néo-Scolastique de Philosophie* (February, 1928), pp. 58–81; F. Renoirte, *La Théorie Physique,* in the same *Revue* for November, 1923; the collection entitled *Qu'est-ce que la Science?* (Paris, 1926), in which the answers given to the question by Duhem, Poincaré, Meyerson, and Le Roy, are reviewed by other scientists; P. Rossi, *La Teoria Fisica di Pietro Duhem,* in *Rivista di Filosofia Neo-Scolastica* (July-October, 1927), pp. 280–298; L. J. Walker, *Realism and Physical Science,* in *Theories of Knowledge* (London, 1919), pp. 473–505. Also, *Gregorianum,* IX, 3, (1928), pp. 442–460.

century, and has continued unabated to the present time.

The Neo-Scholastic alone has ready to his hand the sound principles that can heal the age-long breach between philosophy and science, restore the proper balance between these intimately related modes of human knowledge, and furnish the natural sciences with the light they have been hitherto seeking in vain. And it is high time for the scientist to recognize that he has a twofold need of philosophy: as a guide, to establish and to guard the presuppositions of all science; as the perfection of scientific knowledge, for metaphysical problems germinate spontaneously, so to speak, on the very soil worked over by the positive sciences. In their own way, some contemporary thinkers are beginning to realize this need.[30]

By the testimony of non-Scholastics themselves, many American philosophers fail to discriminate between philosophy and science. At the Sixth International Congress of Philosophy, held in 1926, too many of the Americans, says Dr. E. S. Bates,[31] were unable to emerge from the level of the sciences to that of philosophy, supposing themselves to be dealing with philosophy when they were really dealing with physics, psychology, and sociology. In this, he thinks, members of the Congress revealed a general American attitude.

Apropos of this matter Dr. Dewey said at the Con-

[30] Cfr. A. N. Whitehead, *Science and the Modern World* (New York, 1926), pp. 25, 86.

[31] In *The Commonweal* for October, 1926, p. 521.

gress: "There is energy and activity among us, enough and to spare. Not an inconsiderable part of the vigor that once went into industrial accomplishments now finds its way into science; our scientific 'plant' is coming in its way to rival our industrial plants. Especially in psychology and the social sciences an amount of effort is putting forth which is hardly equalled in the rest of the world. He would be a shameless braggart who claimed that the result is as yet adequate to the activity. What is the matter? It lies, I think, with our lack of imagination [?] in generating leading ideas. Because we are afraid of speculative ideas, we do, and do over and over again, an immense amount of dead, specialized work in the region of 'facts.' We forget that facts are only data. . . . As long as *we worship science and are afraid of philosophy,* we shall have no great science, except a lagging and halting continuation of what is thought and said elsewhere. As far as any plea is implicit in what has been said, it is, then, a plea for the casting off of that intellectual timidity which hampers the wings of imagination, a plea for speculative audacity, for more faith in ideas, sloughing off a cowardly reliance upon those partial ideas to which we are wont to give the name of facts." [32]

President Lowell, of Harvard University, spoke in a similar vein: "We have learned to live, but we have not learned why to live. We have lived faster than many people, but we do not know why we do it. Now,

[32] In *Proceedings of the Sixth International Congress of Philosophy* (New York, 1927), p. 542. (Italics mine).

we want to know where we are going. We are burning our coal and oil, but what for? In order that posterity may be bankrupt, or in order that it may be better? Do we think of anything but the speed with which we are doing something which may be after all nothing more than a turning of a squirrel's wheel? There is another reason why I think philosophy is needed now. Great advances have been made by the methods of excessive specialization. . . . We have learned a great deal by specialization, *but has not the time come for a synthesis of what we know?* . . . We need at the present day something that will break down the barriers between the subjects. Indeed, we are losing something in this land of ours by excessive organization. We organize departments so rigidly that nobody may look into a subject that does not belong to him for fear of being despised by those who are experts in it. We need to break down those barriers, and that is the work of philosophy. This we need now more than we have needed it for a long time. We need men who will sit on the border line of subjects and look with a philosophic eye over more than one field. And what is more, we need to have each man study his own subject as a part of universal knowledge,—which means universal philosophy." [33]

The fourth task of progressive Scholasticism is that of rethinking and developing the best thought of the Greek and medieval masters, and especially that of St.

[33] In *op. cit.*, p. LXXIV–V (Italics mine).

Thomas, in function of the established results of modern and contemporaneous philosophy and science, and of the problems presented by the life and culture of to-day. By what process is the old Scholasticism, and particularly the old Thomism, to be brought up to date so as to become a new Scholasticism and a new Thomism?

To-day the Leonine encyclical on the restoration of Scholastic philosophy is being given a more intelligent interpretation because its deeper and broader meaning and purpose have been more clearly recognized. The shortsighted zealotry and narrow literalism of certain enthusiasts during the years immediately following its publication, are yielding to that historical sense, to that conception of the progress of the human mind,[34] to that comprehensive spirit with which the universal and synthetic genius of St. Thomas would interpret the document were he living to-day.[35] We are to rethink the doctrines of Aquinas, or better, to think as he would think, to work as he would work, to employ the methods he would employ, were he in the midst of the philosophical, scientific, and cultural currents of

[34] St. Thomas himself has lucidly explained his conception of this progress and of the proper attitude towards the thought of the past, in *De Substantiis Separatis,* cap. IX; *In I De Anima,* lect. 2; *In II Metaphys.,* lect. 1, *ad finem; In III Metaphys.,* lect. 1.—Cfr. S. Vismara, *Il Concetto della Storia nel Pensiero Scolastico* (Milan, 1924), p. 33.

[35] Cfr. A. Sertillanges, *S. Thomas d'Aquin* (Paris, 4th ed., 1925), Vol. II, pp. 327 sqq.; Rimaud, *op. cit.,* p. 7; Zybura, *op. cit.,* pp. 471–479.

the present. His abiding ideal was the achievement of integral truth. His constant preoccupation was to see truth steadily and to see it as a whole. He sought its elements everywhere. He strove to behold it not only through his own eyes, but also through those of others in search of it. He endeavored to understand their opinions, to do them justice, to give them the most favorable interpretation possible. His crystal clear mind vividly realized that the progress of thought is the result of universal co-operation. He who appropriated so much from Aristotle, Plato, Averroës, Avicenna, Albert the Great, and a host of others, would he, were he alive now, haughtily ignore or summarily condemn thinkers like Descartes, Leibniz, Kant, Hegel, Spinoza, and others? Were he with us to-day, would his marvelously fertile intellect merely repeat his *Summae?* Would he subscribe to all their *articuli* and *capita* without any retouching, without any regard for subsequent developments? Would he consent to being a barrier instead of a beacon for the onward march of human thought?

In the works referred to (note 34), St. Thomas presents his ideas on the unfoldment of thought and on the proper attitude towards thinkers of the past. Grateful to our predecessors for their efforts, we should, he says, seek in their works the material for advancement. And this in two ways: by means of their true doctrines, which we appropriate; and through their errors, insofar as they call for a more precise study with a view to refuting them. Moreover, we

are to familiarize ourselves with all opinions, we are to examine every system, for the purpose of disengaging the truth they embody and utilizing it for our own synthesis: "prove all things: hold fast to that which is good." [36] Finally, in that one among the preceding systems which in its *ensemble* seems compatible with a true view of reality, we should strive to determine what is definitively established, to find, if possible, new reasons for upholding it, and to defend it against ever recurring objections. We must reject whatever proves to be erroneous, develop what is only in embryo, and finish what is incomplete.

It is these latter portions of the work which must always be taken up anew. In them consists progress, particularly that connected with the synthesizing process. In the face of this conception of development, who will still dare maintain that St. Thomas intended his system, marvelous though it was in its way and in its day, to be a rigid and a closed system? His synthesis, his doctrinal framework, is supple and open. His theses can be rethought in function of widened mentalities. Without being garbled, they can be enriched by all the genuine contributions of thinkers of succeeding generations.

The method, then, by which the best Greek and medieval thought, particularly that of Aristotle and St. Thomas, is to be quickened into a thought that will

[36] 1 Thess. 5, 21.

be living and effectual for to-day, the process by which it is to be made the organizing leaven that will reconstitute the *philosophia perennis* for a time and generation which have forgotten its very language—this process cannot be one of mere commentary, or addition, or adaptation: it must needs be one of *genuine assimilation,* of vital intus-susception.

The method of commentary alone is out of the question. For centuries it has been exploited by a host of commentators, and has been worn almost threadbare. The insistence on its exclusive use for the works of St. Thomas would be tantamount to resurrecting the aberration of Averroës in regard to the writings of Aristotle: there could be differences of opinion only as to the interpretation of his words and as to the inferences to be drawn from them.

Nor will the mechanical method of addition suffice. A mere juxtaposition of recent doctrines designed as an *external* confirmation or enrichment of the old, would result in something like a party-colored patchwork. But some have actually imagined that the Neo-Scholastic's sole aim was just this practical and tactical one of tricking out the corpse of a supposedly outworn doctrine according to the latest scientific fashion, of adorning it with all the baubles of the laboratory and all the ornaments of present-day erudition, so as to make it presentable to the *élite* of the learned. All this outward finery might impress the shallow. It would evoke contempt and ridicule from the thoughtful for

attempting to disguise a defunct doctrine in the attractive vesture of modernity.[37]

Some propose adaptation. But this, too, in one sense at least, is open to exception. There is an essential difference between adaptation as an external method and the internal, vital process of assimilation, of a development by virtue of an energy immanent in the organism. The process of adaptation implies the passivity of an idea which is being acted upon by external environment, by the currents surrounding it, by the men who variously interpret it. The new ideas do not become intrinsic and homogeneous to the old in the substantial unity of a harmonious whole, but retain their former independent existences or "souls" by the side of the old. Truth, however, essentially means unity, and an organism can have but one soul.

For these reasons assimilation is the process indispensably necessary. It is wholly different from a mere external adaptation: it means *activity,* and that not from without, but from within—an *intrinsic* activity. Every living being is capable of this intus-susception; what is more, the latter is a condition *sine qua non,* and a test of its very vitality. Living truth, therefore, precisely because it is such, possesses a marvelous assimilative power. And the higher the place a truth holds in the scale of theoretical values, the more intimately it embraces all subordinate truths, that is to say, assimilates them.

[37] A. Gemelli, in *S. Tommaso d'Aquino* (Milan, 1923), pp. 31 sqq.

Moreover, as in assimilating bodily nourishment we do not cease to be ourselves, but rather transmute the assimilated substance into our very own, so the assimilation of new truths does not imply the abdication of the truths we already possess, but rather their conservation and development.

Truth calls to truth because there is a most intimate relationship between one truth and another: they are kindred parts of one great whole. And the deepest reason of this affinity and mutual attraction lies in the sublime fact that they are all reflections of the one Divine Logos.

Scholastic philosophy, then, in so far as it is a fund of living, perennial truths, cannot rest satisfied with merely moving alongside of other contemporaneous currents of thought, or with attempting some sort of compromise with other systems: because its imperishable truths are living truths, they have the capacity as well as the appetence for assimilating whatever is true in subsequent developments, for an intussusception governed by principles similar to those controlling the growth of every living thing, principles as constant as they are comprehensive. By this assimilative process the perennial philosophy is able to incorporate into the vital unity of its organism and to vivify by its spirit every truth the mind discovers in every domain of human knowledge.

Thus, after the example of the "Prince of Scholastics," the truly Scholastic mentality strives after an integral view of reality, after a comprehensive possession

of truth. It bewares of idolizing portions of truth. It endeavors to maintain the proper proportion and perspective. It is ever on its guard against overstressing one aspect of reality in any domain. It studies carefully all one-sided views, and readily accepts every kernel of truth they contain for embodiment in its own synthesis. This well-balanced, all-inclusive view of reality stands out in striking contrast to those partial systems, each one of which gazes on reality only from its own favorite narrow angle, with the result of a philosophic (if such it can be called) vision that lacks perspective, proportion, and comprehensiveness.

All the foregoing remarks point to the aim, ideal, and method of progressive Scholasticism: to penetrate more deeply into the best thought of the great Greeks and the medieval Scholastics; to rethink it, in the manner outlined, in reference to modern conquests in every realm of thought and to present-day problems; with fine discernment to search out the perennially true in the old and the new; thoroughly to assimilate both, with a view to the eventual elaboration, by another Aristotle or another Thomas, of a richer and more fruitful philosophical synthesis of existing knowledge than any yet achieved.

III

A distinct and striking change of attitude towards Scholasticism has come about in the recent past. There is "a homeward march of the intellect of Europe." [38]

[38] V. McNabb. in E. Gilson, *The Philosophy of St. Thomas* (London and St. Louis, 1924), p. v.

In our own country a re-awakened interest in Scholastic thought, a closer study and a clearer understanding of its content, method, and spirit, are on the increase; we have the examples of earnest thinkers like Professors Longwell, Sheldon, and others. The Sixth International Congress of Philosophy invited several Neo-Scholastics to present various aspects of Scholastic doctrine. Chairs of Neo-Scholastic philosophy have recently been founded in several of our non-Catholic universities.

On the whole, the outlook for the New Scholasticism is promising, and this chiefly for two reasons.

We have, in the first place, the wide-spread and intense yearning for reality, for the absolute: "back to the object," "back to objective metaphysics," are cries heard on many sides. The modern mind is at length vividly realizing that for so long it has been given the stone of appearances, and it is now hungering for the bread of reality.

Kant's artificial "system" was doomed to dissolution.[39] But its spirit and tendency impregnated to its very depths the greater part of the thought of the nineteenth century as well as that of many of our contemporaries. To such thought the very idea of an intellect capable of laying hold of the reality of things existing independently of the thinker became inconceivable. In the majority of modern systems the in-

[39] Cfr. the article, *Le Kantisme est mort,* by P. Charles, in the *Nouvelle Revue Théologique* (December, 1927), Vol. 54, No. 10.

tellect, dispossessed of its proper object, stripped of its proper virtues, uncertain of its first principles, abandoning all hope of ever reaching the real, either abdicated its own rights in favor of the concrete of sense by yielding to the fascinations of positivism—and we have scientism and historism; or, because "man is a metaphysical animal" with an inborn longing for the absolute, it proclaimed the primacy of man's appetitive powers, of the will, of sentiment, of "action"—and we have the anti-intellectualistic systems of to-day, which twist and torture thought in their preposterous efforts to discover truth without the laws of the intelligence.[40]

Like a prisoner of self, like a squirrel in its cage, the modern mind for the most part has been feverishly circling round the ego without ever getting outside and beyond it. Disillusioned by all the assumptions, fictions, psychologisms, and mythical ideologies, an ever increasing number of serious thinkers is finally becoming keenly alive to one of the primary spontaneous convictions of mankind: it is of the very nature of the intellect to *know,* and to know *things.* This accounts for the fact that so many significant tendencies and aspirations of the day are inspired by an intense desire to cast off subjectivism, relativism, and to get back to the object, to the absolute—to metaphysics by way of the intelligence. These aspirations are apparent in the world of art and letters, of sociology and economics

[40] Cfr. J. Maritain, *Réflexions sur l'Intelligence* (Paris, 1924), pp. 36, 49, 303 sqq.

to the treasures of the real, inasmuch as it leads to the philosophy of being, to an *objective* metaphysics. Because it holds fast to a rational loyalty to the intellect, to reason and its principles, without a rationalistic and aprioristic enslavement to it, this doctrine is the light that will lead the mind out of the slough of delusions onto the solid ground of truth. An atheistic philosopher, Gonzague Truc, sees the only salvation for reason in a return to Scholasticism.[44] "In any settlement of the meaning of intelligence," says Professor Spearman, of the University of London, "it [Scholastic philosophy] possesses an indubitable claim to be heard before all others." [45] It is recognized as the philosophy of common sense, as the embodiment of the wisdom of the race, because it is an easy and natural development of common and universal habits of thought: it is built on the justification and systematization of the spontaneous convictions of mankind; common sense is the salt that keeps it fresh and wholesome. "It stays close to human experience . . . and has the passion of the common man for intelligibility, for understanding the meaning and the significance of everything." [46] It strongly recommends itself

Coffey, *Epistemology* (London and New York, 1917), Vol. I.

[44] Gonzague Truc, *Le Retour à la Scolastique* (Paris, 1919), pp. 158, 162, and *passim.*

[45] E. Spearman, *The Nature of Intelligence and the Principle of Cognition* (New York and London, 2nd ed., 1927), p. 22.

[46] J. H. Randall, Jr., *The Making of the Modern Mind* (Boston, 1926), pp. 31, 32.

as the philosophy of the golden mean [47] because it steers a clear course between the Scylla and Charybdis of monism and extreme dualism in cosmology, of materialism and excessive spiritualism in anthropology, of sensism and idealism (rationalism) in theory of knowledge.

"It is a fact worthy of note that after the long detour of idealism, the human mind is perforce returning to the realism which was the life of the great philosophical tradition. This prolonged search of modern philosophy, which at times seemed hopeless, will not have been without profit. It has enabled the human mind to become the better conscious of its processes, of its limits, and of its profound relations with nature. The old realism will prove itself the most capable of assimilating whatever of profound truth idealism has discovered or recovered." [48]

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July 10, 1928.

[47] Cfr. P. Tischleder, *Die geistesgeschichtliche Bedeutung des hl. Thomas von Aquin für Metaphysik, Ethik und Theologie* (Freiburg im Breisgau, 1927).

[48] R. Kremer, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

The present edition of my book, *Riflessioni sulla Scolastica,* shows notable differences from the Italian original, because of the additions and revisions I have made in the latter for this English version.

For the second chapter, English-speaking readers will find very valuable supplementary material in the recent work, now in its second edition, by Dr. Zybura, entitled, *Present-Day Thinkers and the New Scholasticism,* which has been received with such wide-spread and warm approval. This excellent book has the enviable merit of being at once a work of accurate information (in Parts I and II), and a work of synthesis and personal penetration (in Part III and the Appendix). In this latter respect it has a place among the most intelligent and well-pondered that have come to my notice.

The importance of the problems treated in the following pages can hardly be over-estimated. The keen interest these problems naturally arouse in all earnest thinkers leads the author and the translator to harbor the hope that the taste for studies of this nature will grow apace and establish itself among the cultured of the English-speaking world, so that their particular genius may contribute in an ever growing measure toward the advancement of such studies.

GERARDO BRUNI

Rome, June, 1928.

CONTENTS

PAGE

DEDICATION iii

TRANSLATOR'S FOREWORD iv

AUTHOR'S PREFACE xxxvi

INTRODUCTION 1

CHAPTER I. SCHOLASTIC PHILOSOPHY AND THE PROBLEM OF ITS FREEDOM 15

1. Divine and Human Wisdom in the Mediterranean Religions 15
2. The Noontide of the Christian Middle Ages and the Problem of the Relations between Faith and Reason 20
3. The New Aspects of the Problem in the Thirteenth Century 28
4. Essentially a Philosophic Problem . . 30
5. The Philosophic Maturity of the Thirteenth Century 36
6. The World of Nature the Foundation of the World of Grace 46
7. The Intrinsic and Extrinsic Character of Faith 50
8. The Nature of the Act of Faith . . . 53
9. The Position of Theology in Regard to the Other Sciences 57
10. Faith and Logic 61
11. Faith Is Perfective of Human Nature . 67
12. Theology as Philosophy 69

PAGE

13. Diverse Participation of Creatures in the One Divine Essence 74
14. The Continuity between the World of Nature and the World of Grace . . . 79
15. Intellect and Reason 82
16. Additional Note on the Profoundly Human Value of Faith 90

CHAPTER II. SCHOLASTICISM AND THE HISTORICAL PROBLEM 93

1. The Anti-Historical Mentality . . . 93
2. Consequences of the Anti-Historical Mentality 95
3. Opposite Opinions on the Causes of the Decadence of Scholasticism 97
4. Consequences of the Opinions Held by Some Scholastics 99
5. The Historical Sense of Aristotelianism . 100
6. The New Mentality Beginning with the Thirteenth Century 103
7. Fertility of the Distinction Between Truth and a System of Truth 106
8. The Task Performed by Systems . . . 111
9. The Task of Thomism 113
10. The Eclectic Process 120
11. Historical Continuity 121
12. The Synthesizing Process 124
13. What Should Be the Historical Viewpoint of the Scholastic? 127
14. An Attempt of Genius 144
15. The Maturity of the Italian Neo-Scholastics 158
16. Against the Anti-Metaphysical Idol . . 160

INTRODUCTION

In the face of the idealistic thought which continues to dominate Italian philosophic culture, there is no other group that presents such a forceful and united front to many weighty questions [1] as do certain sections of the new Scholasticism. When referring to Scholastic thought the actualistic Idealists of Italy,—evincing that historic sense which is likely to be accounted as their outstanding merit,—do indeed speak of assimilating its assimilable elements and of going beyond it,[2] but never do they dismiss it with a downright negation.[3] On the other hand, the traditional thought in its new formation, as well as in the one it hopes gradually to achieve, is naturally loath to resign itself to the rôle of a mere stepping-stone to

[1] Cfr. G. De Ruggiero, *La filosofia contemporanea* (Bari, 1920), I, p. 207; Vincenzo La Via, *La più recente attività neoscolastica in Italia,* in *Giornale Critico della Filosofia Italiana* (*September,* 1923), pp. 237–270.

[2] We have no word to express, from the philosophic viewpoint, what the Italians call *superamento* (*superare*).—(Tr.)

[3] In this they show more philosophic spirit than some other thinkers, who regard Scholasticism as "a system that has had its day," as "a dead issue, of historical interest only."—Cfr. J. S. Zybura, *Present-Day Thinkers and the New Scholasticism* (St. Louis, 2nd ed., 1927), pp. 3, 116, 404 sq. (Tr.).

the ascent to life of so-called modern philosophy. It is well aware of being a victorious thought and therefore equal to conquering life in its historical development.

The "age-old wisdom" does not propose to live on memories of the past—even though it is a glorious past. And, as a matter of fact, the last decades witnessed the rise of valiant champions of Scholastic thought,—especially in Italy, France, Belgium, and Germany,—vindicators full of confidence, who with manifest success sought to challenge the onward march of their adversaries; and this not only in the domain of pure speculation, but in the field of social and political applications as well. Each of these countries, following the bent of its particular genius, has made its own contributions to the renascence of Scholastic thought. Thus France specialized in giving us masterly works of interpretation accessible to modern mentality; Germany, in erudite researches and some notable metaphysical elaborations. The school of Louvain, a strongly organized centre of Scholastic culture, produced diverse works of varied interest. It is well known that for some time it remained almost exclusively the merit of this school to show the modern world that there was no problem of life or contemporary culture which the traditional thought could not attempt to solve with confidence. In Italy there was a movement of the renascence as

well as the renewal of Thomistic thought since the time of Sanseverino. The three discourses entitled, *Il Rinnovamento del pensiero tomistico e la scienza moderna,*[4] which Salvatore Talamo delivered in the *Accademia Filosofico-Teologica di S. Tommaso d'Aquino,* then founded at Naples, bear the date of 1874. These discourses, given before the appearance of the famous encyclical *Aeterni Patris* of Leo XIII, are indeed significant; yet, in Italy the position taken by Talamo was not always upheld by others; recently, however, after a brief period of uncertainty,[5] it has been taken up again and developed by the group of scholars who have Gemelli for their leader. Their position,—unexplainable, to be sure, without the influence exercised by the particular conditions of Italian culture, and without the contribution made by the studies at Louvain, for example,—has an importance and a meaning for the whole world of scholars and, in my opinion, represents a decisive contribution to the renewal of Scholastic thought. This is my reason for calling special attention to it.

However, as was pointed out, we are not to think that this will of Scholastic thought to life and conquest evinced its briskness only in the pure domain of studies and speculation. Above all, the thought

[4] The third edition of this booklet appeared in 1927 (Rome, Fred. Pustet).

[5] Cfr. Agostino Gemelli, *Il mio contributo alla filosofia neoscolastica* (Milano, *Vita e Pensiero,* 1926), p. 68.

and conquering activity of the adherents of the so-called *Democratic-Christian* or *Christian-Social* party, working especially in the field of syndicalism and politics, furnish a palpable proof of the capability of Scholastic thought to play a rôle in modern life. And, be it well noted, there is here question of triumphs and conquests to be explained by the force of attraction inherent in the philosophic ideas of these men and not, to be exact, by the religious ones of Catholicism, which they likewise generally profess. That such is the case the Scholastics can prove easily enough: in the first place, by establishing the fact that in modern life no other philosophic conception outside the Aristotelian-Thomistic or, more broadly, the Neo-Scholastic, has upheld the activities of Catholics; secondly, by denying that dogma in and of itself—that is to say, if we take into account its character of absolute and entire exclusiveness—can establish neighborly relations with the divers currents of thought of which it frequently represents a downright negation, and in regard to which, therefore, its intolerance is and must needs remain complete, unable of itself to distinguish between means [6] for making itself respected, because it is not a theory of the means, but a system of the absolute, *sic et simpliciter,* and, as such, beyond the relative world of man, be-

[6] Dogma as such, limits itself to proclaiming the truth, and not the means by which, or the conditions under which, it

yond his natural life, history, and development. By this the Scholastics merely wish to assert that it was impossible to descend from the heights of the dogmatic idea and the principles of theological science in order to establish a *theory of fellowship,* a *"religion" of conduct,* so to speak (and as Mr. Wright, the leader of the so-called *Pathfinders,* would perhaps designate it), without the aid of a philosophy, that is, without coming out of the purely theological domain and entering that of philosophy. Thus the task of safeguarding the conquest and promoting the defense of the liberties—religious, social, and political —of Catholics, by speaking in the name of the rights common to all men without distinction, this task could be successfully undertaken only by a philosophy; in the intentions of the Scholastics, however, it must needs be a philosophy which, while always raising its voice in the name of reason, must at the same time be capable of providing a sturdy defense of the supernatural against the pretensions of various philosophical systems.

may assure its triumph. It is different with philosophy. It, too, announces absolute truths, but it does not overlook the human conditions through which its triumph may be achieved: thus it is that philosophy is also anthropology and ethics; and therefore, to it more properly belongs the function of speaking in the name of the rights common to all men. To be sure, the theologian likewise treats of these human conditions; but, strictly speaking, only in the rôle of philosopher and outside the theological domain.

But this philosophy which to-day is so spiritedly asserting its reasons and right to live and flourish, after so many centuries is still made the butt for scorn and ridicule. What are the more serious charges hurled against it, and what account should be taken of them by a dispassionate and serene critic?

*

* *

The end of the medieval world—to begin with the currents of the Italian Renaissance—was marked not only by the abandonment of the deductive method, in which even the golden period of Scholasticism had unduly tarried, and by the advent of the naturalistic and immanentistic philosophies; it was not only athwart the spirit of the *Instauratio Magna,* planned and pursued by Francis Bacon, that the need of inaugurating a *new* philosophy made itself felt: this entire movement, so hostile to tradition, was in fact and finally to assume the force and proportions of a reaction and a rebellion of thought against the alleged tutelage heretofore exercised over it by theological science. At that time it was possible to believe that one must needs cease to be a theologian if one aspired to become a philosopher: an opinion which, as is well known, almost turned medieval science topsy-turvy.

The road inevitably leading from the theory of the

"double truth" to that of an open rebellion was traversed soon enough. The philosophers of the Italian Renaissance, and later the German, English, and French philosophers, unanimously charged theology with having held thought in bondage during the whole course of the Middle Ages. Such a charge, while tending to create an imaginary abyss between philosophical and theological thought, aimed above all at heaping ridicule on the scientific claims of Scholasticism.

This attitude of the modern towards the medieval world was unquestionably the result of an error due to the abstract point of view from which modern philosophy continued for so long to regard thought and history, and the correction of which has begun only to-day. On the other hand, the remnants of medieval thought or, to be more precise, those currents which persisted in their loud appeals to the old Scholasticism—all pent up, and therefore left entirely to themselves, in seclusion and isolation—ended by execrating the life which, in spite of them, continued to unfold itself all around. This "great refusal," the bitter fruit of abject cowardice, was it also a proof of an irremediable incapacity of Scholastic thought to take part in modern life?

*

* *

I must absolve theology from the charge of having obstructed philosophic progress; but I cannot do the same for philosophy, nor for that theological and Platonic mentality which finally prevailed in the bosom of Scholastic thought, and which perhaps to-day still continues to retard the development one has a right to expect from that thought. Instead of unjustly accusing theology of having enslaved philosophic thought, we should rather acknowledge that, in the end, the latter benefited by the influence coming to it from the former: philosophy gained in depth and boldness. This helpful influence exercised on philosophic thought by theology is observable during the entire medieval period but, naturally, in a very special manner during the time of its greatest scientific splendor.

Did not theology, then, constitute a limit for the medieval thinker? On this point it is imperative to have a clear understanding. To-day, in view of the actual state of research, there can no longer be a question of denying the limit, but only of explaining it. I maintain that, from whatever point of view one starts, no one would any longer venture to deny a certain distinction between philosophy and theology; instead, each will seek to give his own explanation of it. In like manner no one, not even the actualistic philosopher, will dare reach a pure and simple negation of the object of knowledge, but he

will deny its sense-origin and therefore its metaphysical differentiation from the subject. And so, concerning the problem of the relations between philosophy and theology, modern philosophy gives us a monistic interpretation, or at least tends to give an increasingly concrete one,[7] while Scholasticism remains decidedly firm in its dualistic interpretation.

The question arises: Is the nature of this latter interpretation, together with the terms of its expression, such as to annul the autonomy and spontaneity of philosophic thought, and to render it meaningless to speak about the existence of a Scholastic *philosophy?* This problem, dealt with in the first part of my treatise, is an old one, but by no means one of those that may be overlooked by the modern thinker who wishes to acquire a reliable knowledge of Scholasticism and, therefore, of the sources of his own thought.

The knowledge of the relations carefully thought out by medieval thinkers between philosophy and theology not only holds out the advantage of disclosing in a trice the most salient characteristic of a philosophic system, inasmuch as it shows that system to be a thought that has reached its maturity and is fully conscious of what it is and what it wants;

[7] Cfr. Rudolph G. Bandas, *"Revelation and Dogma in Contemporary Thought,"* in *The New Scholasticism,* Vol. I, No. 2, pp. 119–135.

it is also such as to be capable of revealing the point at which—for the Middle Ages—the human had to *bind* itself to the divine (*religare, religio*), and the understanding of which enables us to pass judgment on this particular system of relations between earth and Heaven which must be regarded as wholly peculiar to the general civilization of the medieval period. For this period was stamped with a special character, distinguishing it from all other cultural epochs, precisely because of the mentality that dictated those relations.

I hold, then, that it is of paramount importance for the very understanding of the civilization of such a period to have a clear idea of this problem, as it was felt and solved by the Scholastics. Better than any other it enables us to comprehend the personality of a philosophy which in the past accomplished an immense task in civilizing the European nations, because it presents that personality in what is most peculiar to it. The knowledge of the solution given to this problem discloses, I should like to say, the Scholastic system in its extreme terms, even to the confines of its productions, even to the point where, because of its weakening power, it almost seems constrained to take refuge in theological science, and thus to abdicate its spontaneity and its originality. It is, I repeat, the problem which, while making us acquainted with the nature of a philo-

sophic thought (the most mature thought of the Middle Ages), enables us better than any other, and without the reading of many volumes, to grasp the most striking characteristic of an entire civilization, of a whole mentality, with immediate and important reflections for the understanding of the one we represent to-day.

To be sure, my treatise does not develop all the features of this delicate problem, nor does it make even a passing reference to all: there is a whole literature on the subject, easily accessible, and I did not wish to repeat what others had already written. Modern philosophy, obedient to its immanentistic exigency, according to some, or to that of concreteness, according to others, shows a tendency to conceive philosophy and theology in an ever stricter and more intimate mutual function. Keeping to a line of severe objectivity, I did not wish to discuss disputed questions; in taking up the subject of the relations between philosophy and theology, and in view of the stated exigency of modern thought, I proposed to answer the question whether, and in what measure, that exigency can be regarded as justified and satisfied by holding fast to the solution provided by the Schoolmen. Faithful, therefore, to this precise scope of my study, I have taken particular care to bring out in bold relief those of the reasons adduced by

the Scholastics which seemed to me adapted to diminish rather than increase the distance between medieval and modern speculation.

The conclusion of this first part of my treatise will be that Scholasticism *is a philosophy,* and represents a purely and strictly philosophical conception of the world, notwithstanding its relations with Catholic dogma; moreover, that the system of these relations is of its very nature such as to satisfy fundamentally —if not exactly as some would have it—the alleged immanentistic exigencies of modern thought, and surely to gratify its tendencies toward a more integral and concrete conception of life.

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* *

On the other hand, the *fact* that the direction of modern thought originated in an open rebellion against all positive theology, against every system of transcendence, and almost instantly, from the very dawn of Italian Humanism and the Renaissance, manifested itself as a worldly wisdom (*Weltweisheit*), thus representing, historically at least, a violent reaction against the *ancilla theologiae,*—this fact reveals a crisis that meant a direct blow at the value of the orientation of Scholastic thought itself: this phenomenon shows us a crisis of Scholastic philosophy. But what manner of a crisis?

Obviously, it is one thing to speak of a definitive, and quite another to speak of a relative crisis of Scholasticism. In the case of a definitive crisis, it would be an anachronism now to speak of Scholasticsm or to think as a Scholastic: and, as a matter of fact, its adversaries do speak of it as of a thing now relegated to the history of the past, or at most utilize it to explain the development of their own doctrines. If, instead, one admits merely a relative crisis of Scholasticism, he is under obligation to make clear in what manner and measure Scholastic thought still continued to be the motive force, the soul of that very speculation—the modern—which declared itself its outspoken enemy.[8] In other words, a *Scholastic justification* of the history of modern philosophy becomes imperative: it is necessary to show how and why it can be said that Scholasticism entered as a living element into the very midst of modern systems of philosophy. This is equivalent to saying that it is time for Scholasticism to construct its own concept of history and of the relations of history with philosophy, thus attempting to justify before the scientific world the undeniable and at once imposing fact of its former decadence.

On this second point,—agitated above any other and on which Scholastics have argued against anti-Scholastics, and Scholastics against Scholastics,—I

[8] Cfr. J. S. Zybura, *op. cit.*, pp. 437, 506 sqq.

have limited myself to some passing and fragmentary observations on a simple question of method, devoting due attention to that conception of history which, initiated by Hegel, was subsequently developed in Italy by Croce and Gentile.

And so the first part of this work aims to show how the ancillary function of Scholastic philosophy could not, *of itself,* hinder the progress of thought, while the second part purposes to point out that if Scholasticism is actually face to face (as it surely is) with the problem of placing itself abreast of the *true* progress of present-day thought and constantly holding itself *au courant* therewith, it is a problem with which Catholic theology has nothing whatever to do; that, instead, it is for Scholasticism to fight a battle purely and simply philosophical against the abstractionist procedures of that Platonic mentality which still dominates it, and which to this day has hindered it from forming a serene judgment on history and from profiting by its lessons.

CHAPTER I

SCHOLASTIC PHILOSOPHY AND THE PROBLEM OF ITS FREEDOM

1. Divine and Human Wisdom in the Mediterranean Religions

AMONG the results of the greatest historical and speculative significance achieved by the Aristotelianism of the School in the thirteenth century was unquestionably that of having solidly grounded the distinction between faith and reason, revelation and philosophy. For a better understanding of this result, —reached only with the first Aristotelian worthy of the name, Albert the Great of Bollstaedt (1206 or 7–1280), the teacher of St. Thomas,—and for a fuller appreciation of its far-reaching import, it would be helpful to visualize the conditions in which philosophic knowledge found itself prior to Albert and Thomas in the face of the thought and religious experience of the various beliefs of the Mediterranean basin, that is, of the Hebrew, Mohammedan, and Catholic religions. A cursory indication of these conditions cannot be neglected here: it will aid us the better to evaluate the significance of that "veri-

table revolution" (of which Gilson speaks [1]) due to the innovative ideas which at the beginning of the twelfth century set in motion that new ferment of ideas—in the domain of metaphysics, psychology, and ethics—which proved big with consequences for the future and counted St. Thomas of Aquin as its chief representative.

The tendency to regard Greek, in particular pre-Socratic and Aristotelian thought, as secular and dangerous, always remained strong with the Mohammedans, less so with the Jews, fitful but not less rabid with the Christians. Avicenna and Averroës suffered fierce persecutions because of their Hellenism, and in the tenth century it became necessary to form secret societies for the study of philosophy. Against the infiltrations of Greek thought into Judaism there were likewise brisk protests. As for the Christians, there remain the famous diatribes of Tatian, Tertullian, and Arnobius against the interference of Greek thought with Christian doctrine.[2]

In the Christian Middle Ages there arose other famous scorners of science, such as Manegold of Lautenbach (+ *circa* 900), Otloh of St. Emmeram (+ *circa* 1070), and St. Peter Damian (+ 1072). Later, in the twelfth century, with the flowering of

[1] *La philosophie au moyen age* (Paris, 1922), Vol. II, p. 4.

[2] W. Windelband, *History of Philosophy* (New York, 1919), Vol. I, pp. 214 and 224–25.

mysticism through the efforts of Paulinus of Aquileia, Otto of Cluny, Rupert of Deutz, Otto of Tournai, Honoratus of Autun, and especially St. Bernard, the *Doctor Mellifluus,*—Walter of St. Victor, author of the treatise *Contra quattuor labyrinthos Franciae,* finally condemned all science, even the quite inconsiderable one of the *Magister Sententiarum.*[3]

I am not quite sure whether this rude race of fault-finders has now disappeared entirely; however, it is gradually vanishing or at least reducing its pretensions. But it was on the scene during the Middle Ages, when many mournfully longed for the time when little or no discussion took place. Coming before and after Bede and Alcuin, they gravely affronted all that fervor of Christian thought tempered in the valiantly sustained struggles of the Fathers against heterodoxy. Even when the golden age of Scholastic philosophy was at its height, there was heard the lament of a Jacopone da Todi, for example, who hurled his scorn at the solemn doctors of the Paris school, while he clung "fearfully to the faith which neither searches nor discusses." [4]

[3] Cfr. J. N. Espenberger, *Die Philosophie des Petrus Lombardus und ihre Stellung im zwölften Jahrhundert,* in *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie des Mittelalters,* III, 5 (Münster, 1901).

[4] G. Gentile, *I problemi della scolastica e il pensiero italiano,* (Bari, 1913), p. 152.

While these attacks of the mystics were directed against all interference of philosophy with religion, in the thirteenth century they were levelled especially at the reformers of philosophic thought, with St. Thomas at their head, who had dared to turn topsy-turvy those "Platonic pages" to which all the science —predominantly theological and religious—of the noontide of the Middle Ages had conveniently limited itself.[5]

But notwithstanding all this, the adversaries of philosophy and followers of fanaticism and religious mysticism could not, at this stage of the medieval period, destroy the Arabic science which had grafted itself on Mohammedanism. Averroës (+ 1198) author of *The Destruction of the Destruction,* triumphed over the author of *The Destruction of Philosophers,* and of *The Renewal of the Religious Sciences,* the orthodox and mystical Al-Gazali (+ 1111), so fiercely hostile to the whole scientific tradition of his people—a tradition glorious with the names of El-Kindi (+ *circa* 837), El-Farabi (+ 950), and Avicenna (+ 1037).

Similarly, it had been impossible to arrest the movement begun in the second century B. C. in the bosom of Judaism, which led to the *speculation* of Philo of Alexandria, for whom the task of theology

[5] *Le poesie spirituali del B. Jacopone da Todi,* ed. Tresatti (Venice, 1617), p. 43.

consisted in interpreting the *religious documents* into a system of scientific doctrines, and who saw in philosophy the higher meaning of Scripture, explaining this relation by the hypothesis that the Greek thinkers had also drawn from Mosaic sources.[6] All this does but manifest Philo's constant preoccupation of justifying before the religion of the fathers the new religion of his spirit, that is, his Hellenism; and his desire to succeed in reconciling the one with the other. In my opinion, this and nothing else is the historic meaning of Philonism.[7]

In like manner, the fanaticism of Tertullian and the zeal of Tatian and Arnobius did not succeed in hindering the Christian school of Alexandria from conceiving divine revelation as the highest form of knowledge;[8] nor could they prevent the rise of a St. Augustine, who to the end hesitated between the rights of faith and those of reason. In virtue of this position which, *mutatis mutandis,* was reproduced in subsequent thinkers until almost the end of the twelfth century, it was possible to forecast the terms in which the great problem would eventually be definitively solved.[9]

[6] W. Windelband, *op. cit.,* Vol. I, pp. 221-222.

[7] Cfr. Emile Brehier, *Les idées philosophiques et religieuses de Philon d'Alexandrie* (Paris, 1925); Windelband, *op. cit.,* Vol. I, p. 222, n. 3.

[8] W. Windelband, *op. cit.,* Vol. I, p. 224.

[9] This can be seen, better than in St. Augustine, in a writer

So it was that medieval thought, having overcome the attitude of opposition in which it had at first tarried, and having subsequently gained confidence in the possibility of reducing philosophic truths to those of theology, cast off all preoccupation with religious defense and proceeded to create for itself the conditions of that freedom which was indispensable for its progress. As if by fate, however, and precisely in consequence of this new fervor brought into speculation, thought again chanced upon those obstacles which erstwhile it believed to have removed once for all. And as a matter of fact, the problem of the relations between philosophy and theology, never completely allayed, urgently called for a solution when, with the discovery of all the works of Aristotle, the philosophic thought of western Europe became more keenly conscious of itself.

2. The Noontide of the Christian Middle Ages and the Problem of the Relations between Faith and Reason

While it must be admitted that in Augustine the struggle between faith and reason remained sterile because it was not philosophically determined, none the less that great Doctor of the Church, when sub-

of the time of the barbarian invasions, Salvianus of Marseilles (5th c. A. D.) Cfr. my work, *Un apologista della Prouvidenza* (Rome, 1924), pp. 17–23.

mitting to the dictates of his religious faith, by no means denied the existence of the philosophic problem, but simply left it unsolved, and Platonically confessed his impotence to rise from the world of γένεσις to that of οὐσία. After the manner of a Platonist, he dug an abyss between the natural and the supernatural order so deep that to fill it up it was not only necessary to have the succor of grace,—an exigency always maintained in the Aristotelian current and in every Catholic philosophy,—but for him matter as compared with spirit, nature and philosophy as compared with the supernatural order and theology, finally took on colors too evanescent, as of things almost dead and on the brink of dispersion. There was question here of a real fading away of the temporal in presence of the eternal.

As is well known, for Plato the reality of this world tends to become a mere shadow: he regards this world as a reality, it is true, but only as a shrinking prolongation of the immortal one. In Platonic thought the being of this world, as compared with the reality of the *species* transported to the *Hyperouranion* and glorified as self-subsisting Ideas, possesses no *ratio propria,* as it does in Aristotelian thought. The reality of the world of Ideas is conceived by Plato in a manner that makes it impossible to comprehend this mortal world as included in the "category" of being. Of course, there are many pas-

sages in Plato's writings on the basis of which this interpretation could be mitigated: but the uncertainty of the philosopher in determining the concept of relative being is so great and so frequently issues in real contradiction, that it becomes impossible to derive from the totality of his writings a consistent doctrine on this problem. And so, considering everything, and notwithstanding these uncertainties and the doctrines expounded in *Philebus* and in the *Republic,* no one has ever seriously thought of extenuating the reproof which Aristotle in his *Metaphysics* administers to Plato on this point.

By relegating the Ideas to an immortal kingdom, Plato barred the way to an understanding of them in relation to the mortal world subject to movement; furthermore, he definitively precluded the way to an understanding of the nature of that very thought which had enabled him to soar so high, even unto the discovery of the eternal essences. For, obviously, it does not suffice to assert, as he does, that the sensible world and the individual are modeled on the Ideas, if these latter have to remain separate (ἰδέαι χωριστάι). What, after all, does the alleged reality of this world of generation and corruption amount to, if it is condemned to remain *separated* from Reality? Is it not thus deprived of the support it needs in order to exist?

Nature, too, must undoubtedly have a value for

Plato. But because he was unable to give a rational justification sufficient to establish this value, he ended by leaving this world outside of being, and the individual without a *ratio propria.* The Platonic world of Ideas renders it impossible to understand the sublunary world. The Platonic concept of being, which betrays its derivation from Parmenides, thus tends to become *univocal,* to be predicated only of the Idea.

But this position had of necessity to become untenable for Plato himself, inasmuch as it resulted in annulling precisely that ethical motive which, originated by Socrates, inspires all his pre-eminently theological metaphysics. Hence, in view of the ethical motives, it was imperative that the world of γένεσις should somehow be reunited to the world of οὐσία. This led Plato to postulate for the individual the ascent to the supreme universality of the Idea, and in some way to go beyond the premises of his extreme dualism under the pressure of ethical exigencies.

Notwithstanding this, however, the final result of Platonic speculation—because of the many lacunae in its metaphysics—was to pulverize the individual. This gap became more patent in the theurgic systems of Plotinus, Porphyry, and Iamblicus, who carried Platonism to its extreme consequences.

Such a union of the particular and the universal,

inspired as it was by an exclusively ethical criterion, imparted to the Platonic ethic a sense of emptiness —that sense of emptiness and, I would say, of discouragement which in the long run cannot but manifest itself in every system of ethics that is not grounded on a solid system of metaphysics. It was an unreal union which Aristotle, and later St. Thomas, must needs regard as a metaphysical melting away not only of the individual, but of the universe itself.

St. Augustine knew how to avoid many of the shortcomings of Platonism; not, however, to the extent of excluding from his scientific thought the tendency towards the abstract which he cherished, and which consequently remained the basic motive of the thought and life of the entire Middle Ages [10] —even after the discovery of the metaphysics, psychology, and ethics of Aristotle.

As long as Plato remained predominant in the Middle Ages, Christian thought was incapable of reaching a solution of the age-old problem of the relations between reason and revelation because in Platonism and Neo-Platonism—even in their medi-

[10] I shall have occasion to speak of the civilization attuned to the Platonic mentality of the Middle Ages, in a work now in preparation on *Political Thought at the End of the Middle Ages.*

eval Christian form—only the first of the two terms *dogma* and *reason,* between which the relations were to be established, had a true propelling force in scientific as well as social life. For during the medieval period there was a repetition, under the influence of Plato, of that mentality which tended to extol the value of the eternal to the detriment of the temporal, to void the significance of this life so as to fill up the life beyond.

Without prejudice to the fundamental truth of this observation we may add: as in Plato the individual is either condemned to remain apart from the Idea without hope of uniting himself to it, or with an excessive ease is led to extol his union with the Ideas, so the thought of the noontide of the Middle Ages proves itself impotent rationally to establish the relation between dogma and reason; it frequently oscillates between an excessive confidence in reason,—to the extent of extolling its power in the whole domain of theological truths, and an inadequate concept of revelation,—to the extent of becoming firmly convinced of the absolute powerlessness of reason and sacrificing all in favor of faith. This explains how the Augustinian current (which at the time represented the official philosophy of the Church), loyal to its Neo-Platonism and realizing that a pure and simple suppression of reason was out of the question, displayed the tendency to taint,

without any too great scruples, the field of theological truths with that of the philosophical, that is, to reduce philosophy to theology. In this respect the excess had reached such grave proportions that St. Anselm and St. Bonaventure, following in the footsteps of St. Augustine, came to regard the dogma of the Trinity as profoundly rational.[11] Only in apparent reaction to all this in the thirteenth century, Latin Averroism, aided by the amazing speculative fervor of the century and headed by Siger of Brabant,[12] a forceful cleric and professor at the Paris University, undertook to dig a veritable abyss between philosophy and revelation by affirming that natural reason can reach a conclusion exactly contrary to faith.

But like the rationalism of Scotus Eriugena, which had expressly identified philosophic with religious truth,[13] the rationalism of Siger, for a different reason, proved equally harmless to the faith because, having preferred to be a religious man rather than a man of science, he necessarily brought himself to

[11] Cfr. Gilson, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 10.

[12] Cfr. Mandonnet, *Siger de Brabant et l'Averroisme latin*, in *Philosophes Belges*, VI, (Louvain, 1911).

[13] In *De div. praed.* I, 1, (P.L. 122), pp. 357–8, we read: "What else is the discussion of philosophy except the exposition of the rules of true religion by which God, the supreme and principal cause of all things, is worshiped in humility and studied by reason?"

underrate the study of philosophy as being a means by which one could hope to come to a knowledge of the *opinions* of philosophers, but not to that of truth (*quaerentes intentionem philosophorum in hoc magis quam veritatem cum philosophice procedamus.*) [14] Hence both philosophers reveal immaturity of thought rather than a haughty rationalism because both, finally throwing themselves into the arms of faith, are far from conceding to reason the value attributed to it by the Thomistic school.

This comparison of the two opposite currents—the one represented by Scotus who, in this respect at least, was a follower of Augustinianism, the other by Siger—is most significant: it shows how the solution of the problem of the relations between faith and reason could be looked for only from a thought *philosophically* mature, inasmuch as both the proposed solutions amount in effect to a negation—express or implicit, it matters little—of one of the terms from which the problem had of necessity to arise. The suppression was a violent one, destined to make the problem always crop up anew, to render it more acute, and finally to set it on the way to its logical solution.

[14] *Quaestiones de anima intellectiva,* in *Philosophes Belges,* VI, 2nd Part, p. 164.—This theory was expressly attacked by St. Thomas in *De Caelo et Mundo,* I, lect. 22.—Cfr. De Wulf, *op. cit.,* Vol. II, p. 93 sq.

3. The New Aspects of the Problem in the Thirteenth Century

The terms of this solution, as I have noted, were implicit in the mutually contrary positions of Augustinianism and of Siger in the thirteenth century; the one, by virtue of its theory of *illumination,* rather inclined to level the terms of faith and reason (hence, to make them gradually disappear as terms), the other accentuating, as no one had ever done—and that by a doctrine which was a prelude to the "double truth" theory professed by so many Catholics of the Renaissance—the separation of the two orders of philosophical and theological knowledge (hence, likewise conspiring to suppress the terms of the problem itself).

But these incongruities and contradictions were not without some usefulness. For while the position of the one side could not but manifest the urgent need of regarding a *separation* with repugnance, the inconveniences flowing from the position taken by the other had to give rise to warnings as to the impossibility of arriving at a pure and simple *identification* of the domain of theological with that of philosophical knowledge. That is to say, a point had been reached where, for an explicit statement of the true terms of the problem, only a better organi-

zation of scientific thought was needed: as the solution of the problem was already mature historically, all that was wanted was a philosophy.

The brilliant mind of Abélard [15] had already given some hints for the understanding of these terms; but we owe it to the innovating energy of the Aristotelianism of Albert, and still more of St. Thomas Aquinas, that the now age-old dispute could be fundamentally settled.

Thus the exigencies shown by the contrary positions between which the solution of the problem had hitherto tarried, demanded, on the one hand, a recognition of the insufficiency of reason to give a finished systematization of all existing knowledge—and this was implicitly the source of inspiration for all those who cherished the separation of the two branches of knowledge; on the other, a recognition of the rights of reason in regard to dogma—and this inspired all the others who overestimated reason's task on the

[15] Cfr. Kaiser, *Pier Lombard critiqué,* (Fribourg, 1901); Heitz, *Essai historique sur les rapports entre la philosophie et la foi de Bérenger de Tours à Thomas d'Aquin,* (Paris, 1909), pp. 7–30; De Wulf, *Le problème des Universaux dans son évolution historique du IX au XIII siècle,"* in *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie,* IX, 4, 1896; Endres, *"Die Dialektiker und ihre Gegner im XI. Jahrhundert,"* in *Philos. Jahrbuch,* Vol. XIX (1906), pp. 20–33; *"Studien zur Geschichte der Frühscholastik," ibid.,* Vol. XXV (1912), pp. 368-371, and Vol. XXVI (1913), pp. 84–93.

theological terrain. These exigencies were marvelously met by the Aristotelian metaphysics and ideology.

4. Essentially a Philosophic Problem

To assign to reason its proper place and, at the same time, firmly to recognize its limitations, this was a task for reason alone, for philosophy; it formed two aspects, or rather two momenta, of one and the same philosophic problem. And so it may be said that the philosophy of the Schoolmen reached its maturity at one stroke when, in the face of theological science, it ably retained the consciousness of self. What is more, not only did medieval thought thereby become mature, but we may even assert that it could not boast of having constituted itself until this problem was solved; for this represented the minimum in a programme for its freedom, dignity, and scientific seriousness. Hence the solution of this problem became the concern of the philosopher and not of the theologian; he was to take a close and attentive look at that reason whose real value and efficient force were variously misconceived, even in the thirteenth century, now by the traditional current of thought (the theological right), now by that of Latin Averroism (the artistic left). To restore the rights of reason was seen to be the paramount requisite for the one side as well as for the other;

moreover, only thus could the confusion of theology and philosophy be removed, the conflict between the two sciences overcome, and the indispensable means provided for satisfying man's need of an enlightened faith. The problem was one of a delicately philosophic nature, and it is bootless to object that in the philosopher's mind theology was to reap the chief benefit from its solution. It is true, of course, that the highest aspiration of the medieval thinker was to become a theologian, not a philosopher: but this does not entitle us to refuse the name of philosopher to the Scholastic. It is now generally admitted that the distinction—as urged by De Wulf [16]—between the content and the inspiration of Scholastic thought can no longer be denied.

The renewed vigor of philosophic thought also brought in its train the flowering of theological works in the thirteenth century, that is, the penetration and systematization of the theological material amassed by the early Fathers of the Church in their struggle against heterodoxy. To Albert and Thomas belongs the honor of having shaken medieval thought out of its torpor. Courage was needed to divert the official philosophy of the Church from its rather convenient but now inadequate position. In fact, it

[16] *History of Mediaeval Philosophy* (translated by E. C. Messenger, New York, 1925), Vol. I, p. 16 sqq.—Some non-Scholastics likewise admit the necessity of this distinction; cfr. Zybura, *op. cit.*, Part I, p. 49 (Tr.).

seemed and was a veritable deed of daring—a bold stroke of which only some faint, but truthful and significant echoes have reached us. To form some idea of the situation, we should reflect on the enervating effect certain innovations must have produced on the minds of contemporary thinkers, deeply imbued as they were with Platonic-Augustinian ideas, the bulk of which had hitherto constituted the jealously guarded patrimony of ecclesiastical tradition; we should consider with what courage the new Aristotelians—these *upstarts* in science—had to arm themselves so as to face and answer criticisms without too much prejudice to their social and academic standing, and to break down the resistance of ignorant and headstrong conservatives.[17]

We can readily imagine how the conservative party must have defended itself, strong as it was by reason

[17] Aegidius Romanus forcefully vindicates the freedom of scientific thought against the "theological right" and sharply takes to task the anti-Thomists on a question much discussed at the time, namely, the unity of the substantial form: "These individuals would do well to hold their peace, and if they wish to persist in a contrary opinion, they should guard against declaring false the one held by the doctors; for they should remember that, by giving way to wrathful words, they simply show the weakness of their own reasoning, and by vaunting their refusal to give satisfaction to any one, they clearly prove their lack of arguments as well as their inability to distinguish a logical from a sophistical demonstration, a real from a merely apparent proof." (*De gradibus formarum accidentalium,* fol. 207, col. a, Venice, 1502.)

of ecclesiastical and political protection, and counting among its adherents men eminent by their learning and holiness of life. In this connection it suffices to mention the scholarship and sanctity of a Bonaventure of Bagnorea, who may justly be regarded as the most intelligent [18] leader of the conservatives.

The dramatic character of the struggles which broke out between conservatives and Aristotelians is vividly portrayed in the now famous work of Mandonnet (cited above). It is likely that their violence has no counterpart in the entire history of philosophy. For in a world ignorant of science or with but a very meager knowledge of it, human thought had never so unexpectedly and so brilliantly raised its voice in defense of its rights—and not only of its own but also of those of theological knowledge which had come to a standstill with the dialectic effort seen in the *Summa* of Alexander of Hales.[19] The speculative movement of the thirteenth

[18] So intelligent that the editors at Quaracchi justly insist on calling attention to the affinity between St. Bonaventure and St. Thomas on numerous points of doctrine.

[19] To appraise the significance of the Aristotelianism of the thirteenth century in the face of the traditional current, see Ehrle, *Der Augustinismus und der Aristotelismus in der Scholastik gegen Ende des 13. Jahrhunderts,* in the *Archiv für Literatur und Kirchengeschichte des Mittelalters* (1898); *L'Agostinismo e L'Aristotelismo nella scolastica del sec. XIII. Ulteriori discussioni e materiali* (Rome, 1925), published sepa-

century was predominantly and directly a philosophic movement; in the second place and indirectly it was a theological one. I mean to say that it was possible to arrive at a systematization of the theological material thanks to the renewed philosophic thought of the School, that is, to Aristotle.[20]

If the major interest none the less remained theological, even after the discovery of Aristotle's works, if the primary preoccupation of the medieval thinker continued to be that of being able to *illuminate* the truth of dogmas, he now at length clearly understood that he could not have done this without a philosophy that was to be held distinct from theology; not only that, but he understood equally well that he could never have provided this light itself if somehow his attempt could have issued in an antagonism to philosophy. In this, I believe, consists the superiority of the thirteenth century over the whole medieval period. It was necessary, above all, that philosophy should be constituted, should have a recognized standing, even though, as we shall see presently, it was to be regarded as *manuductiva ad veritatem theologicam,* as Henry of Ghent puts it.[21] Its relations with theology and with revelation were not to be such as to denature it as philosophy and hence

rately or in the *Xenia Thomistica* on the occasion of the sixth centenary of the canonization of St. Thomas.

[20] De Wulf, *op. cit.*

[21] *Summae quaestionum,* I, VII, 10, 60v.

as a free search for truth. They were not to make of this philosophy the *ancilla theologiae* in the sense of a system devised *ad usum Delphini,* and whose chief and only value should consist in being the platform of dogma. This means, furthermore, that apart from the function it was called upon to fulfil in regard to theology, philosophy had to have a value in and by itself. It was imperative that this function should not be of a sort to make of this philosophy a ridiculous offspring of reason *as such,* to make of it a kind of *philosophia inferior,* whose process was to be deprived of the freedom of constituting itself, as if it had to draw its power not from reason but from sources beyond it and (save the mark!) opposed to it, according to the concept that might be formed of dogma and religious mystery, assumed as its only norm and guide. In a word, this philosophy was not to be the philosophy of theologians in a restrictive, absolute, and base sense of the phrase; it was not to be a philosophy which, powerless to speak in its own name, able only to speak in the name of theology, would eventually be led to recognize limits to its activity. These limits —if there could be a question of limits—Scholastic philosophic thought was to find within itself.

Strong with this consciousness and equipped with the new Peripatetic ideas, the thirteenth century made ready to rethink the age-old problem.

5. The Philosophic Maturity of the Thirteenth Century

When discussing the problem of the relations between faith and reason, the greatest Scholastics of the thirteenth century were wont to make this preliminary observation: Only a rational nature can be the subject of revelation, thus excluding the irrational brute. By this they did not intend to raise reason to a full understanding of the object of faith; but they surely did mean to recognize in reason a very great power in regard to revelation (for which it was a *conditio sine qua non*). Reason was more than a necessary and sufficient condition: it was actually the *foundation* for accomplishing the redemption of the human race: an assertion of the quite obvious truth that for the regeneration of man it was indispensable that man exist.

But revelation, as will be seen presently, was not to limit itself to a generic respect for human nature. Reason advanced well-defined rights in the face of faith. The thirteenth century proves that it had a lively consciousness of the importance of the new positions it had reached. The Peripatetics of this century are aware of representing a new turning-point in the history of Christian civilization as well as a more mature direction of human thought. They know how to appraise the real import of the estrange-

ment that divides them from the past: in regard to the latter they succeed in upholding their superiority. Thus, for example, they do not blink the fact that their science, as compared with that of the noontide of the Middle Ages, was growing worldly. So, too, the famous Aegidius of Rome devotes an entire article of his commentary on the second book of the *Sentences* to show that "the other sciences, which study creatures from a different viewpoint and with a different aim than does theology—of which they are handmaids—are by no means superfluous." [22] In the face of the strikingly theological manner of viewing the problems of life, which was so characteristic of the preceding generations, there is now a vindication of the philosophic one, introduced into the very midst of Christian learning, thanks to the influence of Aristotelianism. Furthermore, there now appears a stressing of the difference between the Platonic and theologizing Augustine and the Peripatetic *homo novus*.

Aegidius of Rome points out that the *theological method* is used by him who studies creatures in relation to the last end to be attained by them; but that there is another way of regarding and studying creatures, another point of view adopted by one who has no intention of pursuing the end aimed at by Augustinian science and, in general, by the wisdom

[22] *Comment. in II Sent.* (Venice, 1581), d. I, q. I, art. 3.

of the whole preceding period. It is the point of view adopted by the older Greek philosophers, whose purpose was to know creatures as they are in themselves. Thus for the first time the Middle Ages distinguished a science of *what is* from a science of *what ought to be,* and fully justified it. "In theology the creature is proposed for our consideration to the end that God may be sought and loved. The philosophers, however, did not always have this as the immediate end of their sciences, but rather *aimed at a knowledge of the creature itself.* Augustine, therefore, speaks in a *theological manner,* because in the Scriptures and in theology this end is always intended, that God may be sought and loved." [23]

Thus the thirteenth century drew a clear-cut distinction between the domain of philosophy and that of theology. At last philosophy had its own field to cultivate! The difference in the processes of the two sciences is sharply brought out. At last a strong philosophic consciousness has arisen: "Human science relies chiefly on reason, and subsequently on authority. Hence we are wont to say that the argument from authority is very lame and weak. And in the second book of the *Metaphysics* (of Aristotle) we are taught (c. 14–15) that it is an obstacle to science to believe the testimony of famous men. So, too, in his commentaries on Aristotle, Alexander

[23] *Op. cit.,* d. I, q. I, art. 3, p. 12, col. b ad 3m.

says: 'We do not believe this man more than others except because he has spoken more in accordance with reason.' Thus we do not believe philosophers except in so far as they have spoken reasonably; for according to the maxim *propter quod unumquodque tale et illud magis* (*I Anal. Post.*, t. 5), we must believe reason more than the philosophers themselves." [24]

Later on we shall see in detail how this philosophic consciousness shows itself competent to select its tasks and proclaim its rights when it is determining the relations between faith and reason.

The Scholastic philosophy of to-day reaffirms with a still maturer consciousness the philosophic character which its relations with dogma have and must have. For it knows full well that those who are exclusively preoccupied with stressing its ancillary function, attempt thereby to despoil it precisely of that value which belongs to it alone, that is, its essential value (as a philosophy), and assign to it one which, on the contrary, should rather be called accidental and secondary.[25] Indeed, it is not the latter, but the former value by virtue of which Scholastic philosophy can take its place on a footing of equality with other philosophic systems: it is only by virtue

[24] Aegidius Romanus, *op. cit.*, d. I, q. I, art. 2, p. 9, col. a. *Quarta et ultima via.*

[25] Cfr. for example, *Thought* (New York, December, 1926), Vol. I, No. 3, pp. 434–444. (Tr.).

of its essential value that it is and can be called a philosophy; by that value alone can it justify its productions and furnish a sufficient reason for the triumphs it has achieved.

Then, too, it cannot be denied that, indirectly, the religious function of Scholastic thought has also contributed toward placing it in an unfavorable light and disguising the nature of its relations with dogma; the more so as the Scholastic philosophy subsequent to the thirteenth century, having become a dead trunk in the field of speculation, finally cast discredit also on theology. In this way the latter could be charged, in its turn, with having fashioned philosophy into immobility after its own image and likeness, restricted its boundaries, thrown obstacles in the way of its progress, and hindered its necessary and continuous contact with life.

In the sequel it will be shown that Catholic theology as such did not deserve these accusations; it remains true, however, that the problem concerning the progress of Scholastic thought naturally came to be studied always in the light of the relations it desired to establish with that theology.

It is the problem of *the freedom of Scholastic philosophy* that reappears with ineluctable historical necessity *whenever Scholasticism overlooks the problem of its own progress and renewal.* Historically it

is perhaps true that not a little was contributed to the decadence of Scholastic philosophy by its continuous contact with Catholic theology. On its side this contact tended to favor the formation of a theological mentality in the bosom of philosophy itself. But whatever truth this observation may contain, directly concerns philosophy and not theology: directly it lays the blame on the defective formation of philosophic thought. Admittedly, this problem of the freedom of philosophy in regard to theology could no longer constitute an obscure point in the speculation of the century that witnessed the *novelty* of St. Thomas—in the speculation of a century that was pre-eminently one of a deep-going renovation. The treatment of this problem was thus to form the most noteworthy manifestation of philosophic thought in that century.

The problem of the relations between faith and reason had to be fully faced at the epoch of the beginning of Scholastic thought and substantially solved during that period or not at all; and the solution reached had to form part of the period of the greatest splendor of that thought, or that period remain without an explanation. So the knowledge of the intellectual movement of the thirteenth century—the golden age of Scholasticism—can reveal many matters helpful for defining the personality of

the system. It is during this period that the philosophic thought of the School was to rise to the highest consciousness of itself. And surely, there is no apter way of grasping this consciousness than by appraising it in the face of that dogma which might be imagined capable of somehow bedimming it. For if the carefully thought out relations between reason and revelation were not to be regarded as of a purely philosophic nature, that is, if these relations could not be ascribed to the work of human reason and resolved into an affirmation of philosophy *as such,* then it is more than obvious that Scholastic thought would have denied itself from its very beginnings, and renounced constituting itself in the very act of pretending to do so.

With St. Thomas, to whom we are indebted for the decisive triumph of Aristotelianism, the prevailingly theological mentality and the well nigh exclusively ecclesiastical culture of the Middle Ages[26] may be said to have disappeared for good. The *Libri Naturales* of Aristotle, which had incurred the censure of Gregory IX, were slowly but irresistibly to gain possession of medieval thought. And so, in the second half of the thirteenth century no one any

[26] Here is a simile by Ehrle: "At the dawn of the thirteenth century Aristotelianism was like a stone hurled on the relatively tranquil surface of the predominantly theological mentality of the twelfth century."—*L'Agostinismo e l'Aristotelismo* (Rome, 1925), p. 8.

longer remembered the edict issued by Gregory on July 7, 1228, to the masters of theology at Paris,[27] forbidding them to mix the wisdom of God with that of men: "You are to teach theological truths without the leaven of worldly science and without adulterating the word of God with the figments of philosophers."[28] Truly, then, it was in the severe gown of a Peripatetic, and not in the robes of a theologian, that St. Thomas could define the relations between philosophy and theology, and bring to the study of dogma the whole immense richness of his speculative thought.

It was the Aristotelian concept he had of the relativity of human nature which, issuing in a more nearly perfect notion of the cognitive capacity of reason, in some measure enabled him to achieve another step toward its freedom and for the present to establish philosophy. In short, it was not a mere desire to reach any kind of conciliation that inspired St. Thomas's system of the relations between philosophy and theology.[29]

[27] Cfr. *Chartularium Universitatis Parisiensis,* I, pp., 114–116, n. 56.

[28] *Ibid.,* p. 116.

[29] That system, as Gilson admirably puts it, must be styled "the necessary consequence of the demands of Reason itself, and not the accidental result of a mere wish for conciliation." *The Philosophy of St. Thomas* (St. Louis and Cambridge, England, 1924), p. 32.

Then, too, in view of the state of the Church in the thirteenth century, the ambition of thinkers, favored as it was by the conditions of freedom indispensable for all progress, naturally turned to the conversion of the infidel world which the Crusades had disclosed to the Christian West. This necessitated an extensive employment of speculative means provided by philosophic reflection. As a result, this period was marked by an intense fervor in seeking *reasons* for the faith: the major preoccupation became that of penetrating the theological material with thought. The soarings of the mystics gave way to cold reasoning, which finally won the preference as a means for man's approach to God. Such use likewise brought about an extrinsic transformation of the theological material by casting it into a system that was *formally* scientific.

The *novelties* of St. Thomas, such as they actually were and as they appeared to his biographer Guglielmo di Tocco and certainly to the majority of his contemporaries, find their explanation in that keener consciousness to which, thanks to Aristotle, philosophic thought had risen since the end of the twelfth century.

As soon as the sun of Platonic predominance had set and, as a result, the *Ideas* had definitively descended to take up their abode on earth, man found

himself capable of acquiring a greater self-confidence, a greater freedom of movement and consciousness of his own value;[30] henceforth human reason could well make some gain against that concept of revelation—frequently absurd and anti-human, because anti-philosophic—which only too often had reigned supreme during the preceding period, including even the golden age of the Fathers.

With St. Thomas and his contemporaries the Christian Middle Ages could claim to have come for the first time into possession of a real and true system of philosophy. Naturally enough the new philosophic consciousness was destined to shine in a very particular manner in dealing with the problem of the relations between faith and reason, when thought facing dogma was called upon concretely to question itself as to its own value, and consequently as to the eventual limits imposed upon it.

But what is the reach and import of the renunciation which human thought under the guidance of Scholastic philosophy purposed to make in favor of an order of revealed truths? How did it mean to assert their transcendent character?

[30] The name *Renaissance* should be transferred from the fifteenth to the thirteenth century.—Cfr. Zybura, *Present-Day Thinkers and the New Scholasticism* (St. Louis, 2nd ed., 1927), p. 425 (Tr.).

6. The World of Nature the Foundation of the World of Grace

For St. Thomas the existence of an order of intelligible things which surpasses the natural capacity of the human mind has the force of evidence; for him the fact of revelation must be a demonstrable fact: "That certain divine truths wholly surpass the capability of human reason, *is most clearly evident.*" [31]

What is more, he comes to consider such an existence as a true and proper *exigency of reason* and of philosophic knowledge: *"We must therefore prove that it is necessary* also for those things which surpass reason to be proposed by God to man as an object of faith." [32] Thus from the *fides quaerens intellectum* (faith seeking for understanding), in which the problem of the relations between the two sciences had for the greater part tarried during the preceding period, the transition is made to the *intellectus quaerens fidem* (the understanding seeking for faith), which forms the great motive that dictated the *Summa Contra Gentiles.* It was in fact the ambition of St. Thomas to show in this work that the

[31] *Summa Contra Gentiles* (translated by the English Dominican Fathers, New York, 1924), First Book, Chap. III, p. 5.

[32] *Op. cit.,* First Book, Chap. 5, p. 9; cfr. also, *Summa Theologica,* I[a], q. I, art. I.

Catholics "who believe this truth . . . believe not lightly," [33] their faith is not without motives for believing.

Besides this, St. Thomas advances the claim that a theological truth must of its very nature be capable of confirming and, even more authoritatively than philosophy, reaffirming the validity of a *truth* discovered by the natural light of reason.[34]

Along this way a further step is made: the truths of the supernatural order, though belonging to the domain of faith and hence above reason, mean an increase of perfection for man's rational nature itself.[35]

The supernatural order must be regarded as a continuation of the natural order, although the passage from the latter to the former is not possible without the assistance of grace. Holding fast to this concept, it can be asserted that with his nature (*from its primal institution,* says Aquinas) man is destined for the supernatural order of beatitude.[36] To put it

[33] *Summa Contra Gentiles, ed. cit.,* First Book, Chap. VI, p. 11.

[34] *Op. cit.,* First Book, Chap. VII, p. 14; *De Veritate,* q. XIV, art. 10, ad 7^{um} et 9^{um}.

[35] ". . . although human reason is unable to grasp fully things that are above reason, it nevertheless acquires much perfection, if at least it holds things, in any way whatever, by faith."—*Summa Contra Gentiles, ed. cit.,* First Book, Chapter V, p. 11.

[36] "From its primal institution human nature was destined

more clearly: if it is true that human nature can not be called the *cause* of the attainment of the beatific end, it is equally true that in this nature we must nevertheless look for the capability of embracing the faith which is to lead it to that end.[37]

It is here affirmed that human nature is incapable of attaining this end *by itself*, not that it can not attain it at all.

In rational human nature we observe a certain aptitude for compassing the supernatural end. But this aptitude, resting as it does on the mere forces of nature, can not issue in an aptitude *sic et simpliciter*, capable of attaining to an end that is above nature. This aptitude of nature for a supernatural end is therefore one that is limited to the non-forfeiture of the eventual help of God. Man is unable to merit grace: if he could, grace would cease to be grace, that is, *gratis data*. What man can do of himself toward reaching his supernatural end may be something very similar to merit, but it is not merit: the concept of grace excludes that of merit. Theologians teach that we can merit *ex congruo*, but never *ex condigno*,[38] so true is it that grace must precede and

for the end of beatitude, not indeed as for an end due to man according to his nature, but only out of divine liberality."—*De Veritate*, q. XIV, art. 10, ad 2 um.

[37] St. Thomas, *op. cit., loc. cit.*, ad 1 um.

[38] "Man without grace is said to merit grace for himself: for if he does all that in him lies, it seems *proper and becoming*

accompany the will in its effort to attain to the good.[39]

The aid of which man stands in need to obtain grace is similar to that needed by the child who prepares for his first writing-exercises: "Our relation to God in the attainment of grace is like unto that of a child unable to write, to his teacher. For it is not enough to give the child pen and ink: the teacher must take him by the hand and guide it so that the child may write correctly. In like manner, it is not enough that God inspire us with good thoughts and that our free will, as a result of these, desire to have

that God should do what is necessary. This, however, is not merit, but may be something similar to merit: for grace can not, properly speaking, fall under merit: for then grace would not be grace."—Aegidius Romanus, *Comment. in II Sent.*, d. XXVII, q. I, art. 3, (Venice, 1581), p. 350, col. a.—Again, the same author says: "If, then, we consider the nature itself of a rational being destined for eternal life, we can find a certain aptitude in it. But as that end is above nature, we can by no means by mere natural powers merit it *ex condigno,* but perhaps *ex congruo."—Ibid.*, d. XXVII, q. I, art. 4, p. 353, col. b.

[39] ". . . how free will, which is something natural, can suffice to obtain grace, which is above nature: because it does not do this in so far as it is moved by its own power, but in so far as it is moved by the power of God."—Aegidius Romanus, *op. cit.*, d. XXVIII, q. I, art. 4, p. 369, col. a.—The same theologian further says that grace "precedes or anticipates the will, that it may desire the good, and follows it that it may not desire it in vain."—*Op. cit.*, d. XXVI, q. II, art. I, p. 321, col. a.

grace: it is necessary that God move our free will itself above its nature so that it may obtain grace, which is a supernatural good." [40]

By itself, therefore, the free will of man can not obtain grace; it is always necessary that the divine influence be exercised upon it and directed to make it equal to the supernatural good and not destroy, in the presence of the latter, what is of the very essence of the will, its freedom.

Nor is this all: it is true that from the merely theoretical viewpoint we can not merit *ex condigno;* but the fact remains that, in virtue of His own promises, God has become man's debtor: "God is our debtor, if not strictly speaking, nevertheless by reason of His promises: for our vigilance and struggles He has promised the crown of justice to all who love His coming." [41]

7. The Intrinsic and Extrinsic Character of Faith

The extrinsic character of faith, then, reduces itself to the impossibility of regarding grace as an effect of nature, not to an impossibility in the latter to receive the former.[42] Faith does not exist *through* this nature, but it must exist *in* it. The *intrinsic* char-

[40] Aegidius Romanus, *op. cit.,* d. XXVIII, q. I, art. 4 (*ed. cit.*), p. 369, col. a.

[41] *Idem, op. cit.,* d. XXVII, q. I, art. 4, p. 355, col. a.

[42] St. Thomas, *De Veritate,* q. XIV, art. 2: *Respondeo dicendum.*

acter of faith is regarded as a necessity by the speculation of the School, which holds that no being can reach its end unless it has *in itself some proportion to that end,* unless in some way it can claim to receive within itself the beginning of that end. The attainment of the supernatural end requires that the natural man be capable of receiving *within himself* the beginning of it.[43] This means that the intervention of faith must not become tantamount to a negation of nature. On the contrary, the exigency that faith be directed to the elevation of nature has always been expressly held by Scholastic thought.

We shall better understand to what degree faith is interior if we reflect that the truths which it proposes must determine the intellect like, and more powerfully than, any philosophic truth.

Although it can not be said that the assent of faith is *caused* by the inquiry of reason,[44] none the less faith is always knowledge—a light fit to move the will. Nay, in its quality of *knowledge* consists the essence of its perfection: "The act of faith essentially consists in *knowledge,* and therein lies its formal and specific perfection." [45]

[43] "Hence it is necessary that *some beginning* of this supernatural knowledge be made *in us;* this takes place by faith which, by virtue of an infused light, holds what surpasses natural knowledge."—St. Thomas, *op. cit., loc. cit.*

[44] *Op. cit.,* q. XIV, art. 2, ad 2[um].

[45] St. Thomas, *op. cit.,* q. XIV, art. 2, ad 10[um].

It is true that theological truth may be compared to a ray from the divine Sun and must therefore preserve intact its extrinsic and transcendent character; on the other hand, however, it is also true that it must reach down so as to touch the human intellect, so as to feed that same light which naturally emanates from the intellect and is its own, so as to make itself perceptible (if I may use the expression) to the nature itself of this intellect by means of its elevating activity.[46]

Thus the majority of the great theologians of the thirteenth century, with St. Thomas Aquinas at their head, can emphasize the *speculative* character of theology.[47] They can likewise insist that, like philosophy, theology is science, the science of being: "Philosophy treats of all being: there can be no science of non-being. Therefore it is necessary that the subject of theology be the same as that of which philosophy treats in some way, but in a different manner." [48]

That is to say, it is not the diversity of the subject-

[46] "Theological truth is sublime, since it is a ray of supernal splendor *illuminating the intellect.*"—*Compendium Theologicae Veritatis* (Venice, 1500), fol. I; this is a valuable work by an unknown author, ascribed by many to Aegidius Romanus.

[47] St. Thomas, *Summa Theologica,* I ª, q. I, art. 4 & 5; *I Sent,* in prolog. q. I, art. 3; *De Veritate,* q. XIV, art. I, 4; etc.

[48] Henry of Ghent, *Summae Quaestionum,* VII, I, 48r (Paris, 1620).

matter that furnishes the basis for the distinction between philosophy and theology, but the *manner* in which it is treated; the difference concerns the line of *procedure* along which the one and the other science arrives at its conclusions. There is not, in Scholastic terminology, a difference in the *material,* but in the *formal* object.

8. The Nature of the Act of Faith

St. Thomas' well-known exposition of this process occurs at the beginning of the fourteenth question of his work, *De Veritate,* where he proposes to answer the query: *"Quidnam sit credere?"*

Here, however, the Thomistic primacy of the intellect seems to be threatened with discomfiture. Here, it would appear, the master is no longer Aristotle, but Augustine and Anselm; no longer the present and the future of the reinvigorated thought of the School, but the past. Here it looks as if not even the maxim, *"Nil volitum nisi praecognitum* (nothing is willed unless it is known beforehand)" can any longer retain its full validity intact. But this is merely an impression—an impression that in the matter of faith the will, "which (according to Anselm) moves all the other powers," [49] was also for St. Thomas to leap into first place, since it must move the intellect

[49] St. Anselm, *De Similitudinibus,* II.

and incline it to believe. However, this indefensible primacy of the will in the question of faith—which would have constituted an unqualifiable exception in the bosom of a system so characteristically intellectualistic as is that of St. Thomas—surely did not sway Aquinas; for in the same passage (a few lines later) he unequivocally expresses the urgent need of something that precedes the will and is sufficient to impel it toward the object of faith. And what is this something "sufficient to move the will," [50] as St. Thomas says? It can only be a ray of light, coming from without, it is true, but such as to be able to exert its illuminative action only in a power of the human soul fit to receive it. Decidedly, then, the affirmation of the primacy of the intellect in the matter of faith is no less explicit in this passage of St. Thomas than in others.

For the observation of St. Thomas that this something must be sufficient to move the will, "but not the intellect," [51] is to be understood with due caution; once we admit the distinction between these two powers of the rational soul, nothing is sufficient to move the will except the intellect.[52] As a matter of fact, he determines that *something* which would suf-

[50] *De Veritate,* q. XIV, art. I, *Respondeo.*

[51] *Ibid.*

[52] "The will looks to some preceding power, namely, the intellect; but the intellect does not."—*Op. cit., loc. cit.,* art. I, ad 3^{um}.

fice to move the will and not the intellect, "as that which is *seen* to be good or suitable;" [53] this is substantially equivalent to reducing the act of faith to an illumination and, therefore, to declaring it to be of an exquisitely intellectual nature.

Faith, too, is certitude, and a certitude that likewise springs from a knowledge of the object. Certitude is not synonymous with evidence. Evidence is the effect of science. The certitude produced by faith does not flow from evidence, although the object of faith also constitutes an imperious demand on the thought of the believer so as to result in an *assensus firmissimus*.[54] The intellect participates in a lesser degree in the intelligibility of the object of faith than it does in that of the object of science.

But how does it happen, then, that a firmer assent (that given by the mind to the object of faith) can spring from a lesser participation of the mind in the intelligibility of the object? The explanation, as already noted, must be sought in the greater sublimity of the object of faith, the participation in which, even though very imperfect, confers a great perfection on the intellect,—a perfection much greater than the participation in the object of science can impart. In the presence of the object of faith the hu-

[53] *Op. cit., loc. cit., Respondeo.*
[54] St. Thomas, *op. cit., loc. cit.*

man intellect is sublimated, even though the participation be very imperfect.

The most firm assent given by the intellect to the object of faith and the greater certitude do not flow, as has been said, from a more perfect participation; and it is precisely here that St. Thomas, not finding in the object of faith the adequate *"forma intelligibilis,"* introduces the activity of the will which is to incline the intellect to assent. But if all this is true, and even though St. Thomas declares that object to be simply *"decens vel utile,"* and thereby more proper to the will than the intellect, in the end it shines with a superior intellectual beauty in the eyes of the believer. For not only does the intellect give it its most steadfast adherence, but the reasoning power of the soul is granted the right of "reflecting on and comparing the matters of belief." [55]

From this it is evident that the distinction definitively established by Scholastic thought between philosophic and theological truths reduces itself, objectively speaking, to a problem of quantity and not of quality. As has been said, the qualification of *science* truly belongs to philosophy (*scientia intelligibilium*) as well as to theology (*scientia credibilium*), and the qualification of *knowledge* is proper to that of philosophy obtained *ex puris naturalibus,* as well as to that of theology obtained *per fidem et*

[55] St. Thomas, *De Veritate,* q. XIV, art. I, ad 2 um.

intelligentiam supernaturalem.[56] And as it is impossible to introduce into the heart of truth a distinction of any kind, the distinction *secundum genus* which St. Thomas in the beginning of his *Summa Theologica*[57] draws between natural and revealed theology, concerns the *manner* in which the two sciences respectively hope to reach their proper object: it is a distinction that flows from an entirely subjective consideration (*quoad nos*) of truth, with those temperings which I have sought to point out in such a subjective distinction. Henry of Ghent writes with precision on this subject: "Hence philosophical and theological truths agree in everything, and philosophical truth leads up to the theological and is a step to it."[58]

9. The Position of Theology in Regard to the Other Sciences

For this characteristic, which the thinker of Ghent met with in philosophy, was not one destined to abide in the purely objective order: not one, therefore, which the philosopher must limit himself to pointing out as an otiose contemplator of extra-temporal truths. The trait of union between philosophy and theology was to have also a subjective value.

[56] Henry of Ghent, *op. cit.*, VII, 5, 54r.
[57] I ª, q. I, art. I, ad 2 ᵘᵐ.
[58] *Op. cit.*, VII, 10, 60v.

If we must regard the supernatural order as an efflorescence of the natural,[59] then philosophy, the science of nature, can no longer be conceived as *separated* from theology, the science of the supernatural. On the contrary, the one science must be regarded as having a relation of order to the other,—essentially, in the objective, fundamentally and by tendency in the subjective field,—just as the natural order is disposed with a view to the supernatural. For the rest, once it is established that the transmission of revelation to man must, according to St. Thomas,[60] have

[59] Cfr. Sertillanges, *Saint Thomas d'Aquin* (Paris, 1922), Vol. II, p. 291 sqq.

[60] Henry of Ghent also expresses the same thought: "For as it is impossible for the blind to know and distinguish colors, so man, left only to his natural powers, is naturally blind as to things spiritual and supernatural, although he is capable of being enlightened by *grace* so as to see them."—*Op. cit.*, c. VII, 10, 60r & v.—As a result of the Fall, human nature became sick but not incurable; incapable of rising by its own power, but naturally capable of rising with the aid of grace. The consequences of original sin did not render the work of Redemption impossible; and man, after sinning, could not entirely stifle the more or less conscious aspirations of his heart for redemption. The Sacred Scriptures picture the ancient world as an unceasing longing for a Saviour that was to come. The work of Redemption thus became an urgent need which man, even though fallen, was capable of expressing because, according to the dogma of original sin, he lost the ability of rising by his own powers, but not that of aspiring to a better state, and much less that of availing himself of the fruits of the Messianic sacrifice.

its beginning in nature, we may well ask on the basis of what reasoning can one deny a certain orderly relation of the natural to the supernatural truths in the subjective sphere as well? So it is that Henry of Ghent could justly charge with vanity those philosophers who cultivated philosophy for itself: "They are those who walk in the vanity of their own mind," [61] inasmuch as it was in theological truth that they should have sought the complement of their knowledge.

Theology is thus placed at the summit of all the sciences, which become its subordinates: "For the other sciences, which have no end of their own, are really given to man only for the sake of theology; hence it is useless to acquire them except as a help to it." [62] From the same standpoint the Scholastics maintain that the philosophy which would wish to regard itself free from theology in the sense of reaching results contradictory to revealed wisdom, would fall short of being a philosophy. To have an orderly relation to God's revealed truth, or at least not to contradict it, is unquestionably an indispensable token of its own truth. We know that the mediaeval thinkers never entirely renounced their quest for an understanding of faith (*fides quaerens intellectum*); well aware that, in view of their concept

[61] *Op. cit.*, VII, 10, 60r.
[62] Henry of Ghent, *op. cit., loc. cit.*

of revelation as a manifestation of the divine intellect, they could not have done so without contradiction.

For the rest, theology gives evidence that the nature of its knowledge is by no means such as to aim at thwarting philosophic knowledge; for it numbers among the truths of faith the possibility of a rational demonstration of the existence of God. Thus it is that the same truth can be a truth of faith as well as a truth of reason. Never and nowise can reason contradict faith, that is, reason can show no truth of faith to be false. On the other hand, in the face of religious mystery, reason can find itself in a situation where it breaks down and must admit its own impotence,—such was the experience of St. Thomas when he attempted to solve philosophically the problem whether or not the world is eternal,—but never in a situation where it is called upon to surrender its rights.[63]

The ancillary function of Scholastic philosophy should not be translated into a negation of itself as thought; on the contrary, it is especially in fulfilling this function that Scholasticism aims to show the urgent need of asserting itself.

How, indeed, can it be said that the nature of the act of faith is opposed to the nature of philosophic

[63] Cfr. G. Gentile, *Il Modernismo e i rapporti tra religione e filosofia* (Bari, 1909), p. 126.

knowledge when, for the Scholastic, the ancillary function of philosophy must be exercised in demonstrating the so-called preambles of faith, such as the existence of God and the fact of revelation?—when, furthermore, that function is called upon to systematize the theological material in a rational order?—when, finally, it must be able to establish that the super-rational is not the irrational and that no valid arguments against dogma are available? It is simply out of the question to accuse Scholasticism of superficiality and even of obscurantism on the ground of its concept of the act of faith, when this act must be a result conditioned by reason, which is the *way* to faith, the *means* for theological systematization, the *defense* of faith itself.[64]

10. Faith and Logic

Obviously, it would be impossible to take a position contrary to the one outlined above without defrauding the truth of faith of the very character of truth, and without denying to reason the ability of attaining truth at all: for, in any case, one truth can not contradict another. At least in the recognized mutual impossibility of being able to deny each other, reason and revelation, according to Scholastic thought, must find a point of contact, even though

[64] Cfr. Olgiati-Zybura, *The Key to the Study of St. Thomas* (St. Louis, 1925), pp. 156–158.

it be a point of contact that can not be called logical. For reason can never consider itself authorized to deny, *sic et simpliciter,* the validity of theological science. The latter will always have in its favor arguments that are, in the most unfavorable of suppositions, probable; while reason will never be able to furnish conclusive proofs against it. Beside the proposition: "I can furnish no certain demonstration for a given theological truth," reason ever finds itself utterly unable to place this other one: "I can furnish a certain demonstration of the falsity of that dogma."

In other words, to a demonstrative deficiency *in favor* of revelation, there is no corresponding demonstrative efficiency on the part of reason *against* revelation, or if there is, it corresponds to another, which in fact neutralizes (without annulling) its force. At any rate, the conclusion is that, when reason can not produce an effective *pro,* neither can it produce an effective *contra.* The logical nexus between natural and supernatural knowledge may simply become severed,[65] and thus *reason,* in the

[65] "We can not prove faith, not because it conflicts with truth, but because its contents are above reason, which can not attain to their proof; and if, because of the excellence of faith, we lack reasons for proving it, all the more so do we lack those for disproving it."—Aegidius Romanus, *Theoremata Quinquaginta de Corpore Christi,* edit. *Apud Antonium Bladum,* fol. Ir., col. a, ad prolog. (Rome, 1554).

most unfavorable case, can view without repugnance the insertion of the revealed knowledge of God into human knowledge, seeing that this repugnance could not, in virtue of the witness of reason itself, offer a victoriously valid justification. And so, in the scholastic conception, reason always asserts itself, also in the face of revelation and without denying dogma.[66]

Thus reason could furnish St. Thomas with one "proof" in favor of the eternity of the world, and with another of equal force in favor of the thesis of creation in time (as taught by faith); that is to say, reason itself witnessed that it had nothing definitive to say on the problem, and left the way open for dogmatic assertion. The conclusion was that not even by way of logic was it possible successfully to separate the man of science from the man of religion, that is, to separate what was so intimately fused in a living unity.

It is, of course, true that, before as well as after the advent of faith in man, there is lacking a fully logical nexus between the natural and the supernatural world; but in the mind of the believer the *ideal* nexus is no longer absent. Granted that the light of faith is a fact; yet it is a victorious fact. Granted that it is a light which inserts itself into the intelligence from without; yet this does not prevent

[66] Cfr. Sertillanges, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 305.

it from becoming immanent therein as life and always triumphantly dictating the motives of life in the face of those that may be suggested by the natural light of reason, by science and philosophy.

In the presence of a truth of faith, then, the worst that can befall the dialectic process is to find itself incapable of furnishing a fully valid demonstration either for or against the dogma; or to find itself face to face with a choice between two contradictory solutions of equal value. In the one case as well as in the other it must forego making a choice at all. From a merely logical point of view the upshot of all this would be scepticism, reduced, if you will, to a simple suspension of judgment, to a kind of ἀποχή. In this state less exacting minds may indeed divert themselves, thus attitudinizing in a sort of philosophic coquetry. But it was out of the question for medieval minds to feel at ease therein, profoundly religious as they were, and therefore convinced of the necessity of seeking a solid basis for life. In point of fact, only men of faith, only men eager for unity could, in the Middle Ages, achieve that recasting of Aristotelianism and Augustinianism which was to constitute the philosophic system of the thirteenth century, and thus bring the man of science to the very threshold of dogma. In no other way can this event find its historical explanation.

I mean to say that in the thirteenth century there was really established a philosophy which in and by itself had nothing whatever to do with dogma, but that such an event could find no historical justification outside the religious and harmonizing preoccupations wholly peculiar to this century.

Here we find ourselves face to face with the faith that seeks for understanding (*fides quaerens intellectum*).

The influence exercised on the formation of medieval philosophic thought by religious prepossessions has a further confirmation. Who, indeed, can deny that the discovery of all the works of Aristotle at the outset of the thirteenth century did not serve chiefly to introduce into the tranquil surface of a culture predominantly ecclesiastical and theological a wholesome leaven of a new life, from which the sacred sciences were to derive the greatest benefits? When did the medieval thinker ever aim to become exclusively a philosopher when becoming a Peripatetic? Did not the new philosophic thought, exulting in its youth, go forth to meet the old oak of dogmatic truths?

Here we are confronted with the understanding seeking for faith (*intellectus quaerens fidem*), with the understanding that places itself at the service of faith because already imbued with revealed truth; we

are in the presence of a philosophy that steadfastly refuses to be cultivated for its own sake. The philosophic system of the Schoolmen issues in an unfinished system—as if it had to find its fulfilment in Catholic theology.

On the one hand, a sheaf of light is thrown by theology upon Scholastic philosophy; on the other, philosophy takes possession of the theological domain on a vast scale. Philosophy and theology mutually influence each other, and this in such a way that it is frequently difficult to say where to fix the respective boundaries of the two sciences. Theoretically this is unexceptionable. Historically, philosophy fulfilled the conspicuous task of a propaedeutic to theology. During the Middle Ages philosophy was never cultivated for its own sake. At that time one could, of course, not become a wise man without philosophy; but the wise man's doctrine was to find its crowning-point in the knowledge of revealed truths. In a system of cognitions the latter had of necessity to form the principal part. With this fact in mind we can readily understand how in the brain of the medieval thinker the limits which it was intended to assign to the exercise of philosophic speculation were finally to acquire a meaning to be carefully determined and, at any rate, far removed from the ordinary concept of a limit, inasmuch as the mind saw in revelation the continuity of life, and

regarded all human knowledge as the means to theological truth as the end.

And so, without voiding the real import of the observation of St. Thomas, the drama of which he speaks in *De Veritate*[67] will perhaps have to be reduced to more modest proportions—a drama which would have to unfold itself within the same mind, destined always to be torn between the dissatisfaction (resulting from the lack of intrinsic evidence) and the firm assent, both of which proceed from the very act of faith.

11. Faith is Perfective of Human Nature

The light of faith is a light in which reason likewise participates, even though imperfectly (*illud lumen non perfecte participatur*). Because of this imperfect mode of participation, reason cannot rest satisfied in the object of faith. Now, as has been said, for the Scholastic the recognition of all this by no means implies that it is impossible for faith to bring human thought into subjection.

We have noted above that in the presence of faith reason may break down, but it cannot be forced to renounce its rights; by breaking the continuity of the dialectic process, however, faith does not con-

[67] Q. XIV, art. I.

stitute itself as a barrier, *sic et simpliciter,* against human understanding. Having reached the limit of its dialectic process, thought rather welcomes the opportunity of rising to the higher atmosphere whither revelation bears it. By this I wish to say that the believer, having exhausted all the dialectic resources of his mind, does not find himself face to face with the object of faith as with a non-thought unable to illumine his intellect, and in which his reason does not likewise participate, even though imperfectly. Theology, like philosophy, is free: and in theological thought the believer can not see an enemy of reason nor its limit; on the contrary, he extols therein his deliverance—the deliverance of thought from that philosophy, that dialectic process which, by its own testimony, is limited and by that token unequal to satisfy his desire for knowledge. No wonder, then, that the medieval philosopher sought in theology for the best means of gratifying this desire and regarded philosophy as simply a science "leading up to theology" (*manuductiva ad theologiam*).

The "certain imperfection"—consisting in the "absence of vision owing to which there still remains a movement of thought in the mind of the believer"—found by St. Thomas [68] in the act of faith, was to be more than compensated by the "certain per-

[68] *De Veritate,* q. XIV, art. 1, ad 5 [um].

fection" procured by faith, namely, "that firmness which belongs to assent." [69]

12. Theology as Philosophy

Theology, then, was not a limitation of philosophy. Rather, in the presence of the latter, the former could always exalt its greater splendor as thought, and hence appear as a kind of higher philosophy. In this sense the medieval theologian knows no higher philosophy than his theology. Says the unknown author of the *Compendium Theologicae Veritatis:* "For philosophy is divided into natural, rational, and moral. Natural philosophy teaches us to know creatures, but not the Creator. Rational philosophy teaches us how to draw conclusions for men, but not how to resist the devil. Moral philosophy teaches us how to acquire the cardinal virtues, but not how to acquire charity. But our *philosophy,* that is, theological truth, achieves all these things." [70]

After the medieval period, the problem of the relations between philosophy and theology was to be agitated anew by modern philosophers. Aided by the consciousness of a greater maturity, the latter attempted various interpretations of the problem, nearly all agreeing, however, in denying the transcendent character of the object of faith and nearly

[69] *Ibid.*
[70] Ed. Venice (1500), fol. 1.

all tending to bring down the one science to the level of the other. From the naturalistic currents of the Italian Renaissance down to the recent idealistic tendencies, modern philosophy, as every one knows, has taken the direction of an open rebellion against the Scholastic dualism of philosophy and theology; and yet, as has been pointed out, that dualism bears within itself exigencies for such profound unity.

Some years ago an interesting controversy developed between De Wulf, the historian of medieval philosophy, and Giovanni Gentile. The latter, in his work, *Il Modernismo e i rapporti tra religione e filosofia,* wished to see in the unflagging efforts of the Scholastics to find reasons for the faith, as well as in the example of St. Thomas "who broke the continuity of thought but did not surrender reason," etc., not the existence of a supernatural truth, but rather that of a philosophy, as yet very imperfect indeed in the mind of the medieval man, but still and exclusively a philosophy; a philosophy that had reached a certain stage of its development.[71]

According to Gentile, the resolution of theology into philosophy, inadequately perceived by the medieval thinker, is by this time an adjudicated question for modern anti-Scholastic philosophers. The fact that the Scholastics subject dogma to the dialectic process should be interpreted to mean that dialectic

[71] *Ed. cit.,* p. 126.

creates instead of presupposing dogma. Thus there should be material and formal coincidence of philosophy and theology.[72] St. Thomas, for example, "who in his *Summa Theologica* gave us his philosophy instead of conceiving a non-philosophical theology," [73] would justify such an interpretation.

I trust that in these pages it has already been sufficiently shown what value this immanentistic exigency of modern philosophy or the latter's demand for concreteness can have in medieval Scholastic thought and to what extent it can be justified.

Hence it seems to me that what has been here pointed out concerning this question, may serve to throw some light on the answer given by M. De Wulf to Giovanni Gentile.[74]

While readily granting that it was going beyond the meaning of De Wulf downrightly to place philosophy on one side of the trench and theology on the other, as Gentile expresses it,[75]—as if instead of a *distinction* De Wulf had intended to introduce a thorough-going *separation* between the two sciences, —yet there is no doubt that the assertion of the idealistic philosopher contains an exigency of philosophic thought which called for its share of justification

[72] Gentile, *op. cit.*, p. 124.

[73] *Id. ibid.*, p. 126.

[74] *La Scolastica vecchia e nuova*, in *Critica*, IX (1911), pp. 215–222.

[75] *Op. cit.*, p. 126.

also from the Scholastic: I mean the exigency of concreteness.

For it should perhaps be granted that Gentile's pretensions were not to be entirely rejected since, in his reply, after having admitted that his Hegelian interpretation of the problem of the relations between philosophy and theology evidently was not and could not be that of the Scholastics, he retorted by verifying in De Wulf the internal method of his criticism in the following words: "But all this, that is, the opinion of the Scholastics on this distinction, neither has nor can have anything in common with what I said about the immanence of a philosophy in theology itself, and about the impossibility of an objective datum for the mind unless the latter *recognizes* it as an objective datum; unless it *recognizes* it as some motive for belief; and this, however imperfect, will be a philosophy." [76] And in truth, for St. Thomas, too, theology had to be an imperfect philosophy since, as has been observed, theology is a relative participation in the dialectic process, and since the object of revelation as well as that of philosophy both find their place in the same *rational* nature of man—the first, *per modum credulitatis,*[77] the second *per modum rationis.*

[76] *La Scolastica e il prof. De Wulf,* in *Critica,* IX (1911), No. 4, p. 308.

[77] St. Thomas, *Summa Contra Gentiles,* Book III, Chap. 152.

For the medieval thinker—as Gentile himself acknowledges—philosophy did not create theology, as it does in idealistic thought; if we regard philosophy as knowledge attainable through the logical power of reasoning, then theology was not philosophy in the eyes of the medieval thinker. But if we keep in mind that the object of theological science likewise touched human thought and hence also took its place in the field of human cognitions among which philosophy was given first place as a synthesis of all natural knowledge, then theology was also philosophy—indeed, it was a more complete philosophy. Hence theology no less than philosophy became a real exigency of thought which, as such, advanced the force of the motives for believing as well as the force of pure reasoning. Under the *formal aspect of knowledge* it is impossible to introduce a distinction between the two sciences.[78] By this title theology is philosophy, and the one is immanent in the other.

Such is the value which the observation of Gentile can have for the Scholastic. Obviously, it served to bring out in strong relief the immanence of the supernatural light in the mind of the believer. Without prejudice of any kind, and without drawing the conclusions Gentile deduced from it, this fact can also be appropriated by Scholasticism.

But it seems to me that the importance of this

[78] Henry of Ghent, *op. cit.*, VII, 5, 54r.

controversy should not be confined to the affirmation of the immanence in us of the supernatural light—a matter of such striking evidence for all; its importance should be gathered from the diverse spiritual motives which in this problem determined the clashing of two intelligences. Two mentalities, in my opinion, faced each other in this controversy: the one, rather abstractionist, Platonic if you will, and for many reasons connected especially with the past; the other, with much more reason deserving to be called modern, is spurred on toward a more concrete vision of life and, after so much metaphysics devoted to the study of God and cosmic nature, seeks in the *interior man* the fountain to quench its thirst.

Hence it is worth while to approach some other specification more capable of lighting upon still other motives in the old thought of the School, motives adapted to reconcile it in some manner and measure with that spirit oriented toward concreteness which commonly presides over the rise and consolidation of the various systems of modern philosophy.

13. Diverse Participation of Creatures in the one Divine Essence

Absolutely speaking there exists a downright coincidence of the intellectual and the divine order.[79]

[79] Cfr. Sertillanges, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 39.

The true object of divine science is God Himself, *absolute loquendo,* that is, God *sub ratione infinita.*[80] In God, in whom the coincidence of the intellectual and the real order is perfect, all the other modes of knowing, corresponding to as many modes of created being, have their term of comparison, their standard. The mode of being determines the mode of knowing. In God alone, as pure Being, is found the perfect universality of knowledge whose degree of perfection depends precisely upon the degree of its immediacy with its object. The science of God is perfect because He is at once Being and Thought in and by Himself. Only to God is God the perfectly proper object of knowledge; hence for every created intellect—because of its necessarily limited mode of knowing—the same *subjectum scientiae* of divine science will not be appropriate; its proper object will not be God *absolutely speaking,* but God *under some finite aspect;*[81] that is, its knowledge of God will be determined by its relative mode of being.

It is true that in the beatific vision the divine *essence* presents itself directly and without intermediaries; and with this in mind, "it may be granted that God as God is the subject or object in the science of the blessed."[82] In reality, however, the

[80] Aegidius Romanus, *De Subjecto Theologiae* (Venice, 1504), fol. 98r, *His visis.*

[81] Aegidius Romanus, *op. cit.,* 98v.

[82] *Id., ibid.*

science of the blessed is quite different from the science of God; and this difference derives from the fact that the science of the blessed has not for its object the divine essence "in every measure of immediacy possible to it," [83] as is the case in God. While God knows Himself *formaliter*, or is the formal cause of the knowledge He has of Himself, in regard to the knowledge of the blessed He is no longer only the formal, but also the efficient cause.[84] That is, God is seen by the blessed through the medium of a finite, created act: "The vision by which the blessed see God is something caused and created"—[85] hence the finiteness of that vision. As a result, it is restricted to the degree necessary for securing our glory and felicity, for both of which we have only a limited capacity, "as our glorification and beatification require." [86] And so God "is the object in the science of the blessed" only "in so far as He is the glorifier and beatifier," communicating Himself to them not in an infinite but in a finite manner.[87]

[83] *Id., ibid.*

[84] Aegidius Romanus, *op. cit., loc cit.:* "For God is not that vision formally or by identity, but *only* causally."—I consider that "only" inexact; hence I have disregarded it, reading the passage as follows: "For God is not that vision formally or by identity *only,* but *also* causally.

[85] *Id., ibid.,* 99b.

[86] *Id., ibid.,* 99r.

[87] *Id., ibid.,* 98v.

But it is well to fix the reader's attention for a while on the carefully thought out relations between the manner of knowing of the blessed and that of God. I continue to quote Aegidius Romanus, who writes: "All the blessed in Heaven know God through the medium by which they are known by Him. Now as they are known by God through the essence of God and not through their own, we must find the reason of this knowledge the blessed have of God, in God Himself, in the divine essence itself, in the same way as we must find in the essence of God the reason of the knowledge God has of Himself. It is, therefore, not in the medium, but in the manner in which, respectively, God knows the blessed and the blessed know God, that we must look for the difference between the one and the other knowledge, for it is through the same divine essence that both come to pass.[88]

The blessed, therefore, see in the very light of God. Adopting in the subject of ideology the psychological and inductive method, the Scholastic Aristotelianism of the thirteenth century arrived at the same conclusions as St. Augustine,[89] who had followed the opposite way. For it was the prevalent preoccupation of St. Augustine to furnish a basis

[88] *Op. cit., loc. cit.,* 99v.

[89] Cfr. Di Somma, *De naturali participatione divini luminis in mente humana secundum S. Augustinum et S. Thomam,* in *"Gregorianum"* (September, 1926), pp. 321–338.

for human cognitions by pointing out the life they had in the bosom of God. It is well known that St. Thomas is also an exemplarist, though not for the same reason as St. Augustine. While Aquinas makes of exemplarism the terminus of his ideology, and is also in a position to find a deductive confirmation of his psychological-inductive method, St. Augustine makes of it the point of departure and arrival without, however, touching the point from which Thomistic ideology had later on to start in order to establish itself. Good Neo-Platonist that he is, St. Augustine aims to inform us, not *how* man knows, but *in what* human intelligence, regarded from an absolute viewpoint, consists: it is the problem of the *origin* of our cognitions that he wishes to solve, so much so that he is able to ask himself emphatically: "Who will say that everything commonly ready to the hand of all who reason and understand does not belong to our nature?" [90] It is well known that Augustinian epistemology is *per causam vel principium.*

Notwithstanding these differences, however, St. Augustine and St. Thomas, as I have said, finally reach the same conclusion: The human intellect is a participation in the divine intellect—man in this life and the blessed in Heaven know in one and the same light of God. In a different manner and measure both participate in the *same* essence of the di-

[90] *De Libero Arbitrio,* II, 33.

vine light. This can beget a *distinction* between the mode of being and the mode of participation in the same light of God, between the blessed and man in this life, but not a separation. Indeed, the beatific state represents as it were what the man in this life is to be: for it is the *act* of man who during his earthly sojourn cannot but be regarded as in *potency* to the kingdom for which he is effectively destined. And so we may conclude that, if the distinction to be admitted between the condition of man in the present life and the beatific state is analogous to that which must be admitted between potency and act, then there exists a true and proper insertion of the natural into the supernatural order.

It remains to be seen whether this insertion is logical or simply real.

14. The Continuity between the World of Nature and the World of Grace

Intelligence as such is certainly something divine only; and *human intelligence,* in *so far as it is human,* is a thing other than the divine intelligence, but not dissimilar. For, as has been said, we understand in so far as we participate in intelligence as such, namely, in the divine intelligence.

The *essence* of intelligence which *per se* exists only in God, but in which man participates, con-

stitutes the bridge by which the discursive reason of man finds itself united to Reality, to God: a nexus, therefore, that is real and, to a certain extent, also logical; for human reason is capable of demonstrating the existence of God and can therefore ascend to the very source of its own being (by means of philosophy). In like manner, a continuity of fact (objective continuity) between man and God cannot be refused recognition in the domain of revealed truths. Nor can we in this same domain refuse to take account of the force—anything but negligible —of the so called *motives for believing,* and of the efforts by which reason unceasingly seeks to penetrate into the very abysses of religious mystery, and which of themselves also establish between the natural and the supernatural order some manner of psychological (subjective) continuity, even though it cannot be called purely logical.

Furthermore, if we recall the Scholastic concept of nature itself, it will become increasingly evident that the leap from nature to grace (in the *proper* sense of the word) is not really a leap in the dark. For it should be kept in mind that, even in regard to his nature, man finds himself in the very midst of the realm of grace (in the *improper* sense) and of divine mercy. In matter of fact, what do we possess that is not a largess? Nature itself has been given us gratuitously; all truth comes from the

Spirit: [91] God is not only the Creator and Conserver of being, but also the principal agent: His presence is to be met with in every operation of His creatures. The creature depends on Him in its being and activity, and in such manner that "the operation of nature would become extinct if God withdrew His latent operation." [92]

By the first and fundamental gift of being we are rendered capable of receiving the other one of revelation. In fact, the gift of faith consists in an *addition* made to the gifts of nature (*superadditum naturae*). Thence the concept of grace (properly speaking); and once grace is granted, it can with reason be said to insert itself naturally in us in so far as we are made capable of receiving it. This observation which recurs many times in the present study is important for my undertaking. Not to remain firm on this point would mean that grace is against nature, whereas the exigency stressed by the Scholastics is that grace must be directed to the perfection of nature.

Situated as it is between the world of sense and

[91] "Nature itself has been given us as a gratuity: all truth may be said to come from the Holy Spirit, by whom all things have been given us as a gift, and who is the first gift in which all things are given, whether natural or otherwise." Aegidius Romanus, *Com. in II Sent.*, dist. XXVIII, q. I, art. I (Venice, 1581), p. 361, col. a.

[92] Aegidius Romanus, *op. cit.*, dist. XXVIII, q. I, art. I (*ed. cit.*), p. 361. col. a.

the world of separated substances (on the horizon of eternity, *in orizonte aeternitatis,* as the philosophers say), the human soul is fit to receive its intellectual perfection either from things, by means of a process abstractive of essences, or from the separated substances by a direct illumination.[93] The fact of revelation is, therefore, a fact which philosophy must be able to demonstrate as suitable to our nature.

15. Intellect and Reason

Heitz [94] observes that St. Thomas, in treating of certitude in matters of faith, introduced a distinction: the truth of faith, because revealed directly by God, is endowed with the highest degree of certitude in the objective order; subjectively, however, it is less certain than philosophic truth because the object of faith is disproportionate to the human mind. But to tell the truth (and as has already been amply pointed out), we find in St. Thomas a contradiction of this assertion of Heitz. The certitude of faith does not belong to the objective order alone, but (and this also in the doctrine of St. Thomas) touches the subjective order as well.[95]

[93] Cfr. Aegidius Romanus, *op. cit.,* dist. XXVIII, q. I, art. I (*ed. cit.*), pp. 359–360.

[94] *Op. cit.,* pp. 155–156.

[95] St. Thomas, *De Veritate,* q. XIV, art. 1, *in corp. et ad 7 um*.

The adherence of the believer to the object of faith is stronger, as such, than that given by the savant to the object of science, and issues in a genuine subjective certitude (which is, however, incapable, of becoming evidence). Hence the distinction itself between faith and reason is no longer to be placed in a world entirely outside of man and with which man can never come in contact. The world of the believer is, and must needs be, also the world of man—of a man greater indeed than the natural man because he has been worked upon by grace directed to raise his humanity to a higher power. The absurd conception of a faith achievable without man, of a faith to which man does not bring his adherence *freely,* has no place whatever in Scholastic thought.

If, then, faith does not mar but make man, if it does not decrease but increase his value in his own eyes, this increase, in Aristotelian thought, must come about by a perfecting of man's reason, which is his entelechy. By this token the assent to faith must have, in regard to man, a value much higher than that of the assent given by reason to its proper object; and faith must be more than reason, consequently more *human* than reason; it must possess a greater value for man; it must, in short, have a higher subjective certitude.

The profound humaneness of the act of faith is

expressed by St. Thomas in the passage where he states that the act of faith essentially consists in knowledge,[96] and that it resides in the intellect "as in its subject." [97]

In this matter the unanimous consent of the Scholastics would not be difficult to establish. But if in one way this very definition of the act of believing is sure to bring the nature of the supernatural light closer to the true nature of man, in another it is designedly meant to bring out the effective reach of this rapprochement. As a matter of fact, Aquinas calls the act of believing an act of the intellect and not of reason; that is to say, the act of faith chiefly and directly touches the *intellect,* and not specifically the reason of man.

It is at this point, therefore—because it is a point the understanding of which is pregnant with important results—that it becomes expedient to note well that, while the intellect is not precisely the same as discursive reason, neither is it to be regarded as something exiled from human nature. Elsewhere we pointed out that intelligence *as such* is one thing, and intelligence *in so far as human* is another. Faith enlightens the intellect of man and calls forth its assent; but it does not reach down to discursive reason so as to appease it. What is the import of

[96] *De Veritate,* q. XIV, art. 2, ad 10 um.
[97] *Ibid.,* art. 4; cfr. *Summa Theol.,* II^a–II^{ae}, q. IV, art I.

all this? In what relations to each other do intellect and reason stand? For my task the question is of capital importance, inasmuch as it brings the problem of the relations of reason and revelation onto a finally well delimited terrain of discussion.

For the Scholastic, man is intellect in *potency* and reason in *act*. In the hierarchy of forms, what is *in act* with regard to a preceding form, is *in potency* with respect to the immediately superior form. The sensitive soul of the brute, while necessarily regarded as *in act* with reference to the preceding vegetative form, must be considered as *in potency* with regard to the rational soul; the latter, in its turn, is *in potency* with respect to the intellect of the blessed which, as we have seen, must be considered as being *in act*. Every form shows an aspiration to the form immediately superior, and it harbors this aspiration as its inmost exigency. This is tantamount to saying that every form can be regarded as a participation in the superior form.

Thus the sojourners on earth and the blessed in Heaven participate in the same divine intellect, though in a different manner. The latter, as has been said, know God, the Reality, directly; the former, indirectly and by means of the *movement* of discursive reason. This reason, however, if reduced to pure movement, could not explain how it, too, comes to participate in the divine intellect not subject to

movement. And so, according to St. Thomas, man specifically endowed with reason, as such participates in God by means of the intellect, which constitutes the *terminus a quo* and the *terminus ad quem* of the movement of his reason. This is equivalent to saying that human reason is not pure movement, but participates in the divine intellect and therefore in its immobility. In point of fact, every reasoning process has its beginning and its end in first principles, the objects of intellection, of immediate apprehension. Indeed, what is reason for the Scholastic but something to which we can assign a beginning because it is intellect, and a movement because it aspires to the repose to be found in a higher intellectuality? Reason is not a thing apart from intellect, because reason itself is an imperfect form of intellect. In man, therefore, it is one and the same power or faculty that is called intellect and reason.[98]

Faith is the revelation of a truth *by way of intellect* to an intellect (the human), which participates in intellect only to a certain degree, and therefore can receive into itself the truth of faith only in a certain measure. Faith represents a partial anticipation of the beatific vision and science, given to the sojourner on earth; the light of faith through grace

[98] Cfr. St. Thomas, *Summa Theol.*, I[a], q. 79, art. 8; *De Veritate*, q. XV, art. 1, *et corp. fin.*; *De Anima*, I, 24 *fin.*

brings the human intellect only partly out of its potential state, but none the less to an extent sufficient for gaining the assent of a rational nature.

The supernatural light will not enable man to reach down by dialectic means to the very heart, so to speak, of the domain of revealed science; but it must place the mind—to begin from where the dialectic process has been effectively silenced—in a condition to rise to a higher vision of *human* reality, —a reality capable of satisfying more fully man's natural desire *to know.*

There is no question here of any abdication whatever which man is supposed to make when he becomes a believer. The light of faith does not direct man *outside* the path of his nature. It is well known that, for the Scholastics, grace does not destroy, but perfects (*perficit*) nature: for them the light of faith must widen the horizon of the philosophic region and, as it were, prolong its results. It is only because of these benefits bestowed by it that faith becomes acceptable to man. In the mind of the believer theological science is there to complete the results of philosophy,—though always holding itself distinct from the processes of the latter,—just as grace is there to perfect nature.

Hence we can quite well understand in what sense and with what justice the anonymous author of the *Compendium Theologicae Veritatis* could find such

great contentment of mind in the theological system, and how he could see in theology the believer's true philosophy (as a system of truth).

Truly, this was a conclusion obvious to the medieval thinker, who wished to have metaphysics and all the other sciences in an orderly relation to theology, though not *secundum rationis modum,* but only *ratione finis;* [99] obvious, too, to him who could assert that theology surpasses philosophy in dignity and certitude, and could write: [100] "Theology is *most certain* because it rests on the *most certain light,* and therefore man holds nothing with greater certitude than what he grasps by faith;" [101] and, after recognizing the value of metaphysical speculation, could clench his concept in these unequivocal terms: "However, there are other modes of certitude: he who has that one [theological certitude] excels others; wherefore we conclude that that one is *simpliciter* more certain;" [102] obvious also to him

[99] Aegidius Romanus, *Comment. in I Sent.* (Venice, 1492), q. VI, *Prolog.*

[100] Aegidius Romanus, *op. cit.,* q. VII, *Prolog.*

[101] Aegidius Romanus, *op. cit.,* q. IX, *Prolog.*

[102] Aegidius Romanus, *op. cit., loc. cit.*—The same Aegidius in his commentary on *II Sent.* (Venice 1581), d. I, q. I, art. 3, p. 12. col. a, ad 2^{um}, asserts: ". . . Theology is more perfect in so far as final consideration and adherence are concerned; but it is not necessary that it be more perfect in everything as to speculation than are the other sciences;" and in *In III Sent.,* d. VII, q. II, art. 3, p. 307, col. b (Rome,

who, after affirming the prevailingly affective character of theology, asks himself whether, notwithstanding this fact, it may *per comparationem ad praxim* rather be called speculative, answers in the affirmative while maintaining that every other kind of knowledge has a relation of order to theological *knowledge:* "But if it should be asked whether it [theology] is more practical than speculative or *vice versa,* we must answer that it is more speculative than practical, *for the divine vision looks chiefly to the condition to which all our knowledge is ordered.*"

But should we wish to regard theology as a science that is more affective than speculative, then, as compared with philosophy, its excellence would become still more conspicuous as a science to which all the others must be ordained. For in Augustinian thought knowing is less than willing and loving: the latter is a light that leads to the possession of God more directly than knowledge.[103]

1623), he beautifully says: "Nothing is more certain to anyone than his faith."

[103] "For by science and by knowledge we cannot reach God immediately, according to 2 Corinth., V, 6: 'while we are in the body we are absent from the Lord.' Wherefore, though in this life we know God through certain veils, nevertheless also in this life we love Him immediately by essence, so that love enters into the divine essence, while science with its veils stands outside."—Aegidius Romanus, *Comment. in II Sent.,* d. XXVI, q. I, art. 3 (*ed. cit.*), p. 14–15.

16. Additional Note on the Profoundly Human Value of Faith

For one who finds himself in possession of the faith, the truths proposed by it necessarily become the terminus of all his cognitive activity; a terminus, and therefore in some measure transcending his own possibilities; but the imperfect knowledge of it, more than the truth of philosophy, already possesses and exalts him even before the perfect embrace. Indeed, man must be regarded as being on the way to his future beatitude. He is a *wayfarer;* he knows quite well that his fully realized nature and his last end coincide, and that by means of faith his rational nature (a participation in the divine intellect) has been intellectually placed a step higher, which brings him much closer to the brightness of *his* last end. That is to say, we are in the presence of a philosophic truth *intellectually* raised to a higher power by theological truth; of a reason which, thanks to grace, has made one step more toward *its* perfection by forgetting itself as reason and finding itself as intellect; we find ourselves in the presence of a verification which theological truth has given to philosophic truth. Moreover, we are face to face with one truth (philosophic) which has found *its* greater certitude in another truth (theological); with one truth (philosophic) indistinguishable by

us from others as far as the essence of truth is concerned, of which we can say that in the theological truth it has brought forth other flowers and fruits of truth, that in theology it has found that higher degree of light of which it was in search: in short, that in theology it became more itself, more a philosophy—a higher philosophy.

Philosophy, then, for the Scholastic, is not the same thing as theology. But even if he wished to bar the latter altogether from the dialectic processes of philosophy (and he could never do this absolutely), it would always remain true that he will never be able to look upon theology as on a non-thought or an external datum.

For the Scholastic, too, philosophy must in some way be immanent in theology, even though he holds fast to the freedom of his philosophic thought and to the possibility of rendering the thought of theology to some degree intelligible. Only that thought is enslaved which could be limited by an external datum, because one thought (philosophic) which finds itself confronted with another thought (theological) cannot be said to find its limit in the latter. This would be self-limitation, and to limit self is to break the limit. "Either this is the meaning of philosophy and also of Scholasticism, and then the latter is a free philosophy like any other philosophy . . . ; or theology is an external datum . . . ,

and then the freedom of Scholasticism is gone. Either the one or the other." [104]

The Scholastic who knows the terms entering into the solution of the thorny problem of the relations between faith and reason, yet cannot find the point of rapprochement of his opinion with that of Gentile, must tell himself that he brings himself to regard these terms from an exclusively objective and mechanical viewpoint, without knowing how to make them live again the life they have in the mind of the believer. Instead, Gentile, who fixed his eyes on this concrete seat of philosophic and theological thought, was able to discern therein the living nexus that unites reason with faith, philosophy with theology, in one *ideally* indissoluble whole.

[104] Gentile, *art. cit.*, p. 308.

CHAPTER II

SCHOLASTICISM AND THE HISTORICAL PROBLEM

1. The Anti-Historical Mentality

In the controversy mentioned in our first chapter, Professor De Wulf challenged Gentile's right to give the problem of the relations between philosophy and theology a value in the sense of absolute idealism.

From the viewpoint of Scholastic philosophy, De Wulf was quite right. In support of his challenge, however, he adduced the unsoundness of Gentile's method of interpreting the value of the history of philosophy from a standpoint that would transcend the opinions of the individual philosophers. According to De Wulf, the theories and systems are to be taken just as they were set forth; they must be given exclusively the value they possessed for their authors.[1] To my mind this claim is excessive. It would assign limits to the understanding of history which thought utterly refuses to recognize and which

[1] *Art. cit.*

it has never consented to respect. For fear of denaturalizing them, we are forbidden to go beyond the intentions of the author of a given system. But this at once gives rise to another problem: we should have to know precisely what those intentions were —and the possibility of solving this question must always appear very problematic, to say the least. What is more, by heeding this restriction we should not only forego the right of giving any interpretation whatsoever to that system, but we should be limited to a mere repetition of it (and only the Lord knows how this would come to pass), thereby refusing to recognize that it has a value for the past as well as for the future. This is tantamount to saying that the value of the system would come to be conceived as uprooted from the soil of historical becoming, that is to say, from that living reality outside of which one's own can not be explained, or at least can not be caught in all its aspects.

The Scholastic philosopher who elects to defend this anti-historical viewpoint with the sole aim of conveniently reposing on the speculation of the thirteenth century and so shirking the troublesome task of exploring the tempestuous sea of modern speculation and life, is very much like the bird that hopes to escape impending danger by hiding its head under its wings! Truly, a Scholastic of this type renders

a poor service to the interests he wishes to defend.

Does he really mean to deny all value to Vico's concept of the *historical character of the idea* and to take his stand upon that of a truth all ready-made, and of which history would be merely a downright repetition? If so, then let him renounce Aristotle and cling anew to Plato and to the doctrine of separated ideas. Let his thought return to the theological stage from which in its infancy it sought deliverance through Aristotelianism that reconciled medieval man with history, with life, and with the God he was seeking in vain outside of creatures. Let Scholastic philosophy frankly admit its pusillanimity, make "the great refusal," and abandon its hope of winning a place in the sun. . . . Let it withdraw from circulation and declare itself bankrupt; for a chorus of voices rising above all others and continuing from the fifteenth century down to the present day issues against it the decree of hatred and death.

2. Consequences of the Anti-Historical Mentality

If this mentality were to get the upper hand in the bosom of Scholasticism, then four centuries of the history of thought would have to remain for it without a name, and be for it as the silence of the grave. What these centuries mean and stand for in the eyes of the absolute of his system, the Scholastic

would never be able to tell. For an absolute that should have to remain sequestered from the history of four or five centuries would evince himself as an absolute shorn of his necessity, that is, he would annul himself as absolute. The Absolute cannot but be ever the conqueror of life and history, at the risk of ending in a radical negation of self. This means furthermore that the metaphysical foundations of the Scholastic system would be threatened with utter collapse unless they proved themselves capable of ruling the world despite the intentions, errors, and weaknesses of individuals. No value whatever could be recognized in the idea that failed to prove its power of realization, its capacity to live and triumph against and in spite of every obstacle. Let us not forget that we are here face to face with the Absolute who should know nothing but victories. Nor let it be said that the ways of the Absolute are infinite; for it is precisely for this reason that all the ways of the world must lead to him: the good and the evil, truth and error. The word and the thought that would seek to deny him could not succeed: they would be irremediably destined to remain futile attempts. For the Scholastic the historical sense demands not only that every system of philosophy, in so far as it is true and according to the measure of its truth, be in a certain sense called *Aristotelian and Christian*—as is rightly

pointed out by Ehrle,[2] who regards these characteristics as essential to the thought of the School—but also that these same characteristics be indirectly affirmed even of what is erroneous in the system and therefore opposed to them: for error, too, bears witness to the truth.

The historical sense should likewise teach the Scholastic that a philosophy which fails to renew itself and shows an inherent incapacity for development, for that very reason bears within itself the stigma of its own condemnation.

3. Opposite Opinions on the Causes of the Decadence of Scholasticism

It is still the opinion of not a few that such precisely are the conditions of inferiority in which Scholasticism finds itself. They aver that Scholasticism neglects to bring itself up to date and no longer represents a vital and directive force in the midst of modern thought and life. These alleged facts are said to indicate that Scholasticism has been superseded and can in nowise return to the position of preëminence which it so long and so honorably held in the past. Its influence in the world is said to be doomed to gradual extinction, or to a revival

[2] "Every sound and reasonable philosophy, therefore, will be and must be in a certain sense *Aristotelian* and *Christian,* hence *Scholastic.*"—*Grundsätzliches zur Charakteristik der neueren und neuesten Scholastik* (Freiburg in Br., 1918), p. 4.

(if such it can be styled), with the aims of Scholastic thought profoundly changed and with its metaphysical positions revolutionized into another philosophic system. The heritage of dualistic Scholasticism, it is claimed, has been appropriated by monistic Idealism.

Whoever flatters himself to have liquidated Scholasticism by such and similar judgments, evidently entertains a concept of history (granting it a certain degree of truth) that is uniquely optimistic, inasmuch as it affirms the regularity of its development even in the smallest detail, and denies the possibility of the intervention of causes which, at least in some sense and measure, must be called disturbing. Whoever judges after this fashion, absolutely confuses truth with fact, and takes his stand upon the downright identity of history and philosophy. He who holds this opinion, therefore, is far from laying the entire blame (as others do) for the failing fortunes of Scholasticism amid modern thought on individuals, on philosophers, and least of all on philosophy itself.

In this work I do not propose to examine the metaphysical value of the viewpoint from which such historical and methodological appraisals spring. I wish only to point out that they must be regarded as absolutely antithetical, because while the one (that of some Scholastics who continue the Platonic tradi-

tion) justifies itself by supposing the *separation* of the objective from the subjective order of truth, the other (that of the idealists) wishes to vindicate itself by the point of view founded on the *identification* of the two orders of truth.

4. Consequences of the Opinions Held by Some Scholastics

But I ask myself whether the Aristotelianism of the School will endure the outrage to which some Scholastics tend to subject the concept of history by making the philosophers alone responsible for the decadence of Scholasticism. I ask further whether in this field they will eventually find themselves in perfect accord with Aristotle, nay, with themselves and with the dualistic and realistic basis of their philosophy. And I answer in the negative.

As a matter of fact, from the viewpoint of Aristotelian dualism and realism, it would be equally inaccurate to attribute the failure of a system supposedly true in its metaphysical groundwork (such as would be the Scholastic system) either to philosophers alone, or to philosophy alone. Not exclusively to philosophy: for the truths which are really the possession of a system are always those that must dominate the world and its history. The universal is to the particular what form is to matter, what

act is to potency; history in its most general meaning must proceed entirely under the impulse and direction of those truths; whatever is particular, fragmentary, relative in history must find in them its unity, that is, its perfection and form. For this reason there cannot exist a fragment of history that is not rational and, in our case, that does not derive its form, actuality, and perfection from that reality which a true system of philosophy has succeeded in grasping. And so, if Scholastic dualism and not monistic idealism were actually to correspond to the reality of things, the second would of necessity and everywhere betray traces of the transcendent; and every system of philosophy—the actualism of Giovanni Gentile not excepted—would have to suffer and be perturbed under the contradiction of a reality denied indeed, but constantly reasserting itself, and that even despite this denial. For no philosophy can sequester rationality, necessity, God, from history; and, from the viewpoint of the Scholastics, no period of history can proceed in its development and activity while seemingly ignorant of the principles of Scholastic metaphysics and without affirming them in some manner and measure.

5. The Historical Sense of Aristotelianism

By saying this, however, I do not mean to acquit

Scholastic philosophy of every charge, as someone has done. For to the Aristotelian mentality of the Scholastic it should be more than obvious that one cannot speak of the philosophy of the Schools as of *the* system *par excellence;* because, however perfect one may wish to believe it, it must always remain a philosophy of philosophers, that is, a universal conditioned by the particular, and for that reason always destined to be limited and imperfect. Hence we can speak only of a philosophy whose fate is imperfection.

The only Scholasticism in existence is that of the Scholastics: there is no Scholasticism in and by itself, situated entirely outside the course of historical development. Plato and Augustine preferred lovingly to contemplate this world *sub specie aeternitatis.* Aristotle and St. Thomas restored to it a value by itself, by making it a *participation* in divine Reality. They considered all creatures as at once actual and potential, thus vindicating the concept of historical development. To explain the world, Plato and Augustine took the First Principle as their point of departure and fixed their contemplation especially on the life which creatures have in the bosom of the divinity, which life, as St. Anselm says,[3] is the life of God's creative essence itself. That is to say, they loved rather to contemplate

[3] *In Evangelium Joannis,* I, 2, no. 1 & 5.

things in their truer life, in the life they have in the bosom of God, in their quality of *rationes aeternae* (eternal essences) and *incommutabilia vera* (unchangeable truths).

The others, the Peripatetics, corrected the one-sidedness of this view, but they took good care not to deny its value. The truth Augustine preferred to contemplate directly in its essence, was to constitute, as I have said, the terminus of the inductive process of St. Thomas.[4] Thomistic speculation reaches its goal where that of St. Augustine takes its start. In this way St. Thomas was to make history and its progress intelligible by disengaging it from the immobility it had assumed for St. Augustine, who loved to view it rather as eternal history in the bosom of God. But the fertility of the Aristotelian procedure of St. Thomas did not stop with making history intelligible as a development, as *filia temporis;* it was also able to understand it, even better than could St. Augustine himself, as the light of the immutable God, as rationality and *filia aeternitatis.*

Thomistic speculation and still more the scientific *method* of St. Thomas, as we shall see presently, take a firm and decisive stand upon the concept of history as *productive of the rational.*

[4] I share the opinion expressed by Msgr. Di Somma in the article cited above.

6. The New Mentality Beginning with the Thirteenth Century

Better than the Platonic St. Augustine, who had dug an abyss between the City of God and the terrestrial city, St. Thomas, by following in the footsteps of the Stagirite, restored to every creature and to the whole of history the value they possess in the eyes of the Eternal. Once he had demanded the recognition of a *ratio propria* for creatures in themselves, a participation in the *ratio aeterna* which they had in the bosom of God, it was no longer possible to separate Heaven from earth. Instead, it was made possible to have a *science of nature,* to found a philosophy, a natural law, to assign to the State its proper end, etc. In short, it was possible to recognize in man and his history an intrinsic finality and value. Everything came back to be blessed in the name of God: to every creature, now a participant in the divine goodness, was restored the confidence to do and to dare.

The ascendency of Platonic abstractionism was at an end. Medieval civilization, hitherto predominantly theological, now took a direction of greater concreteness and also became worldly. Philosophy at last came to the consciousness of self in the face of theology. Similarly, as against landed property, there came forward the economic units of the new

industries and the new commerce. So, too, against the universalism of the polity of Pope and Emperor there arose, together with the renewed consciousness, the new and combative political organisms of the communes, the principalities, and the kingdoms. The old positions of preëminence, monopoly, and privilege fell one after the other. The Idea effectively descended from Heaven to earth, and all men came to participate in it. What was the significance of all this? What did it mean for European civilization, enrichment or waste? The answer, it seems to me, cannot be doubtful for the Scholastic: there was of course a certain amount of waste, for he who dares great things falls short of his ideal. However, all this new fervor of ideas and works was finally destined to mark a real progress in the history of civilization.

Life again had a value for all, and it was now well worth while to live it, and to live it intensely. And this the post-medieval world surely did—a fact that cannot be explained without the civilization that inspired the work of St. Thomas. This new and intensive life was lived especially by the men of the Italian Renaissance, who deserved so well of European civilization because they dared so much, outstripping in this matter the men of the past, who in their niggardliness and pettiness took no pains to continue the great work, being ever

ready for destructive criticism, but slow for constructive effort. With this re-consecration of life appearing, historically, first under the name of Humanism, subsequently under that of Renaissance, naturalism, rationalism, etc., truth and reality began to acquire a quicker rhythm. The churchman and the layman, the rich and the poor, the Church and the State, the learned and the ignorant—all were called to the great work of constructive thought and life, so that the eye of history could witness the infinity of time and space as elements that were now recognized to be the great co-operators with God.

If it is to conform to these just standards, a philosophic synthesis will become increasingly difficult, inasmuch as the task of catching the sense of the unity of life amid such infinite richness will grow more and more arduous. But it is only through these standards and the further development they will receive, that the world can one day come into the possession of a truer and a more enduring synthesis that was the medieval,—of a synthesis that comes nearer to ideal perfection. It is only by means of this modern mentality which necessarily goes beyond the narrow circle of the cloister, widens its horizons beyond those of interests purely and simply ecclesiastical, and is able to move freely amid the life and systems of the present, that the world can be called upon to reaffirm with an ever growing con-

sciousness the supreme reasons and significance of life. This means that we shall arrive at an increasingly clearer concept of the divine that moves history, of the mind that stirs the mass (*mens quae agitat molem*), only on condition of allowing ourselves to be constantly guided by the breadth of this vision. Only so can history appear to us more and more in the fulness of the mission confided to it as the grand manifestation of God, as a theophany.

7. Fertility of the Distinction Between Truth and a System of Truth

We may further ask how, in the face of Scholastic ontology, one can justify the assertion that in the fifteenth century, when, as all admit, the decadence of traditional thought becomes an obvious fact, the progress of thought was suddenly arrested, *sic et simpliciter,* and the world set out upon a *completely* new course.

Or better: how can one justify the assertion implied in the position of some Scholastics—who in reality do nothing more nor less than revive the mentality of Francis Bacon and of so many others of their adversaries—that during the period of Humanism and the Renaissance the scientific direction underwent a radical innovation (*ab imis fundamentis*), so as to render it necessary to regard the whole medieval period (that is, all that is good)

on one side, and the entire modern epoch (that is, all that is bad) on the other, without any historical continuity?[5] In my opinion the Scholastic can save himself from the charge of being in contradiction with the principles of his own philosophy, and from that of possessing a hopelessly anti-historical mentality, only by resolving never again to attempt to wrest so many centuries from God.[6]

For I have never been able to understand what the mere and simple fact of the decadence of Scholasticism proves against the intrinsic goodness and truth of the fundamental principles of the old metaphysics. The decadence could strike the Scholastic *system,* that is, a certain organization of thought, without necessarily entailing, as has been said, the dispersion in history of the *truth* taught by that system. Indeed, what *system* can arrogate to itself the right of calling itself perennial, since, as such,

[5] Zybura (*op. cit.,* p. 493) shares this view of Prof. Longwell, who takes his stand upon the concept of the continuity of history: "In any event, the entire movement from the mediaeval times into our own day constitutes, I am convinced, a continuous development. And that is why it turns out that the modern is so much more mediaeval than is willingly admitted, and the mediaeval so much more modern than is commonly thought."

[6] What is said here, in section 4, and in the following pages, may serve as an answer to the criticism (of the translator's view on continuity) contained in *The Irish Rosary* (June, 1927), No. 6, p. 475, and repeated by the same critic in *Divus Thomas* (Fribourg) 1927, No. III, p. 352 sq. (Tr.).

it must be regarded as a historical and temporary expression of the scientific organization of thought always on the way to becoming more perfect? What does not die, even among men, is truth and not systems—though at times the truth may seem lost together with the downfall of a system of which it happened to form a part. To be more precise: to some extent that truth will really be lost together with the decadence of the system; but it will be lost only in the form it took on in that system, only in the import it had in that system; and therefore, it may be regarded as different in the new system simply because it manifests itself in a different manner, that is, always the same and always different. This imparts to history the value of something that is always the same, yet always different, a divine and human history in which the divine is immanent and governs in ways of infinite variety.

History is act and potency; it is unity and multiplicity. One might say that it likewise tends to the perfection of the geometric circular form which is the most perfect; dissatisfied with itself in some periods because of certain forms it has reached; destined in other periods to bring itself, if only for a short time, to regard the circle closed and its own task finished. At such times history deludes itself and in this way sometimes expresses its weakness. Such a period is then followed by another of exces-

sive diffidence. It is in this period that human effort is directed towards bringing about a radical renovation *ab imis*. This is another delusion history suffers concerning the real reach of its power for renewal; it is another way of expressing its weakness through an excessive dispersion of energy. It sins by too much faith in act; it sins by too much faith in the value of its becoming. This excessive faith placed chiefly in act, was the sin of the medieval period, which restricted all the world's polity to the universalism of Pope and Emperor, gave us the finished cathedrals, forms of an art inspired by a concept of mystical, superhuman perfection, and the *Summae,* claiming to contain the conceptual expression of all the richness of the world, nature and grace.

What system, in so far as it is a human elaboration, is perfect and not subject to decadence? This latter fate befell the Scholastic system, which, nevertheless, could not have been without influence on human history and civilization. Its better fruits were not to be lost completely. It is a fact that Scholasticism suffered a deep decline at the opening of the fifteenth century. But unless we wish to reduce all Greek and medieval thought to a mere fancy, unless we purpose to defraud the speculation of such long historical periods of all value whatsoever, and thus make ourselves ridiculous in the eyes of all, we are constrained to draw a distinction between Scholasti-

cism and the Scholastic *system,* and to admit that the decadence in question had to affect chiefly the latter and not the former. This need occasion no surprise, but rather provides the required testimony both for those who verify the undeniable fact of decadence, and for those who firmly retain the conviction that Scholasticism is by no means dead.

The Neo-Scholastics do not pretend to revive the dead, but only wish to heal the sick, even though stricken with a dangerous disease. And no one among the adversaries of Scholasticism should pronounce it dead and buried; but rather, with that historical sense which is not wanting to Gentile, for example, they should declare themselves its continuators. And so, what the Neo-Scholastics wish to bring to life again is, I should say, the Scholastic *system*—the only thing that can somehow be regarded by them as dead—and not Scholasticism itself; for inasmuch as it cannot be identified with the system nor be subjected to its vicissitudes, it had in some way to continue to develop its life. In the judgment of friend and foe, then, the fact of the decadence of the Scholastic system cannot have deprived Scholasticism of its life nor of its capacity to seek a new systematization.

Scholasticism came to be denied and even scorned. For a system that tends to shut itself up, as did the Scholastic system, and to remain the same, when

once it has reached a certain degree of completeness, will some fine day find itself outstripped by events which call for a new philosophy (new at least in a certain sense), for a new synthesis which frequently rises in *historical* antithesis and in reaction to the old.

8. The Task Performed by Systems

According to this idea of history, which is also in keeping with the Aristotelian concept of the universal existing in the particular, truth makes its way across the gradual elimination of diverse philosophies or systematizations of philosophic knowledge. This means that truth, as *science,* comes to us by means of these philosophies; once their historical mission is fulfilled, the *systems* disappear in the sense that on the upward course of human civilization they never repeat themselves *sic et simpliciter.* Thus St. Augustine remained the master of the entire Christian Middle Ages down to the triumph of Peripateticism in the thirteenth century; Thomistic Aristotelianism was not a pure and simple denial of St. Augustine, but neither was it a mere repetition of his doctrines. Similarly many Scholastics to-day desire to be called Thomists, but almost in the same way as the Peripatetics of the thirteenth century aspired (and not without reason) to be called adherents of St. Augustine. Perhaps this comparison

is somewhat too strong and will displease many, because also for such Scholastics the perennial value of the results of the speculation of St. Thomas has a significance much more ample than that of which the Neo-Platonism of St. Augustine could boast.

At any rate, I do not mean to insist on this point, satisfied with having observed how the position of these Scholastics in regard to the effective results gathered from the Thomistic philosophy of the thirteenth century, reveals a sense of history that deserves notice here because they are the Scholastics of the future—if Scholasticism as they understand it is to have a future.

All this now constitutes an implied exigency in the concept the moderns have formed of history. As we have already pointed out, however, it may also be assumed as a logical consequence of the metaphysical principles laid down by Thomistic speculation. What is more, without this concept the Thomistic phenomenon itself, that is, the establishment in the thirteenth century of that Peripatetic direction which found its most emphatic expression in the philosophy of St. Thomas, would remain an historically inexplicable fact. It would indeed be very useful for all, but much more so for certain Scholastics, if they succeeded in photographing, so to speak, the mentality and the breadth of vision with which St. Thomas utilized all the results of speculation by

drawing from the most diversified sources, Greek, Latin, Arabic and Hebrew.

As early as 1918 Ehrle had the happy insight to realize that the problem of renovation which so vehemently agitates the Scholastic thought of to-day does not preëminently consist in the will to bind oneself in everything and everywhere to Thomistic teaching.

9. The Task of Thomism

With a view to such a renovation it is imperative, in the opinion of Ehrle, to know St. Thomas. It is necessary, moreover, that the knowledge of the Angelic Doctor and of his time be widened and improved through minute and painstaking research and investigation. Ehrle also outlines an entire programme of work still to be accomplished in this direction. In his opinion, however, it would be most harmful, false, and foolish to maintain that Scholasticism, and much less the progress of all human thought, could have come to a standstill with St. Thomas.[7]

[7] "After we have come to know St. Thomas and his works in the manner indicated, we must, if we are to utilize and develop his elaborations *in his spirit,* follow his example by familiarizing ourselves also with all that has been accomplished in the last centuries toward the cultivation of Scholasticism." —F. Card. Ehrle, S.J., *Grundsätzliches zur Charakteristik der neueren und neuesten Scholastik* (Freiburg in Br., 1918), p. 24 (Italics mine).

And so, in regard to Scholasticism we are not to overlook the fact that it made some progress even during the period of Nominalism, and especially in the sixteenth century.[8] St. Thomas was not infallible, nor was St. Augustine. It would be disastrous to allow oneself to be carried away by an exaggerated appraisal of the doctrines of these two geniuses. Such an exaggeration would bar the way to the proper utilization even of those benefits which Providence through them intended to bestow on the world.[9] Even in the presence of great masters it

[8] "They [the Scholastics of the sixteenth century] further believed that in their researches they were not to rest satisfied with St. Thomas and to turn aside with impunity from the achievements of succeeding generations. In this they were quite right; for if such work, earnestly performed and substantially still moving in the right track, had been of no avail whatever, then we should surely grow doubtful about the capability of the human mind."—*Op. cit.*, p. 17.—Non-Scholastics share this view. Recently Prof. A. E. Taylor, of Edinburgh University, wrote to the translator: "And the Neo-Thomist needs to remember that mankind have not simply been playing the fool since 1274." And: "As a writer in the Louvain *Revue de Philosophie* said the other day, it is futile to ask us to believe that the most eminent philosophers from Descartes on have merely been talking puerile nonsense."—Zybura, *op. cit.*, pp. 71, 70; cfr. *ibid.* p. 472 sqq. (Tr.).

[9] "But however highly we may dare appraise the two providential figures of Augustine and Thomas, so prominent in the realm of mind, we must none the less also guard against *overestimating* them, for this would detract from the wholesome influence Providence intended them to exercise. In the present economy of salvation God could have sent His Church teach-

is imperative that our mind should remain free to note other stages on the path of progress.[10]

It is therefore quite natural for Ehrle to maintain that it is not in a pure and simple return to Thomistic teaching that the restless and as yet wavering Neo-Scholastic thought can seek its salvation and the reason for its future. This sort of return, which mayhap was the secret hope of him who counselled the extension of the famous twenty-four theses, [11] is surely not on the programme of Neo-Scholastics.[12] For the rest, the return to St. Thomas desired by Leo XIII, as Ehrle further points out,[13]

ers whose writings would be free from all error; but, as history teaches, He has not done so."—Ehrle, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

[10] "The great teachers should be our beacon-lights and pillars of strength; but they should not exclude independent inquiry and thereby bar the open course to progress."—Ehrle, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

[11] Guido Mattiussi, S.J., *Le XXIV tesi della filosofia di San Tommaso d'Aquino approvate dalla S. Congregazione degli Studi* (Rome, 1917).—On the interpretation to be given to this act of the Sacred Congregation of Studies, cfr. Ehrle, *op. cit., ed. cit.*, p. 28; also *Scholastik,* Jahrgang I, Heft 4, p. 568; *Archives de Philosophie,* Vol. IV, cahier 4, p. 86.

[12] *Cfr. Acta Primi Congressus Thomistici Internationalis* (Rome, 1925), pp. 309–310. (Tr.).

[13] "The return to St. Thomas desired by Leo and his two successors comprises two things: first, the return to his doctrine; secondly, *and much more, the return to his spirit and his method of working.*"—And it is further interesting to know why Cardinal Ehrle placed such a high value on this kind of return to St. Thomas: "This latter [the spirit and method]

should consist in a return to the teaching of St. Thomas, but much more in a return to his spirit and his method of working (*Arbeitsart*).

Apropos of this last question are some important remarks by the Jesuit P. Descoqs, who, in loyalty to the traditions of his Order, counsels the Neo-Scholastic against descending to the level of a mere commentator of Aquinas.

In taking up the defense of his essay on *François Suarez, sa philosophie et les rapports qu'elle a avec la theologie,*[14] against M. L. Mahien,[15] he writes as follows in the excellent *Archives de Philosophie*:[16] "The Doctor of Coimbra recognized Aristotle and St. Thomas as his guides: his assertions on this point are so frequent and so formal as to render a doubt on the subject impossible. But he does not propose to descend to the simple rôle of a commentator. He discusses the thought of the master, controls it, examines the criticisms leveled against it and, as the case may be, interprets it, defends it, slightly varies or completes it, and when it seems unacceptable to him, regretfully abandons it. Here we

was the source of his doctrines, and *only* this kind of return can enable us to appraise and develop his teaching according to the needs of a radically changed condition of the times."—*Op. cit., ed. cit.*, p. 21 (Italics mine).

[14] In *Archives de Philosophie,* Vol. II, cahier 2, pp. 123–154.

[15] M. L. Mahien, *Eclectisme suarézien,* in *Revue Thomiste* (May–June 1925).

[16] *Ibid.,* Vol. IV, cahier III.

have on his own avowal the attitude Suarez took; and I believe M. Mahien will not deny this. In principle, is it not a good one?" [17]

Apposite remarks these, followed by others equally important on the manner of understanding tradition. According to Descoqs, tradition is to be regarded as alive only in a mind that is progressive; it has a function in the direction of progress. As a progressive, therefore, Suarez is entirely in the spirit of tradition: his is the only method that belongs to the spirit of true conservatives. The conservatism of those who refuse to adopt it is ridiculous.

Suarez who constantly maintains a vigilant intellect in regard to the teaching of the Angelic Doctor and seeks to sift its results impartially, is the true Thomist, because he reproduces the fundamentally progressive spirit of Aquinas,—that spirit which in the thirteenth century succeeded in triumphing over a whole world of enemies. "And because," continues Descoqs in his spirited controversy, "in taking the Angelic Doctor for the point of departure he [Suarez] corrects him, completes him and does not deem himself bound always to adhere to the letter of the master,—the only method of making progress in the sense of tradition,—will it for that reason be denied that he is loyal to this same tradition, as if literalism alone and stagnant comment were the

[17] *Archives de Philosophie, ant. cit.*, pp. 86–87.

mark of the spirit of tradition? . . . This assertion cannot be taken seriously. It is incontrovertible that Suarez was not satisfied to be a mere commentator, a simple glossarist. That he was always happy in his personal attempts, I am certainly not prepared to say. But it should no longer be a matter for discussion that by his *method* he aided in advancing philosophy, and that he was a true Thomist, *loyal to the thoroughly progressive spirit of St. Thomas, and a better and more intelligent disciple of Aquinas than so many reputed representatives of the Thomistic school* who hold fast to the literal and material text of the great Doctor, but in whom one looks in vain for any advancement—be it ever so small—of metaphysical science." [18]

Like Ehrle, Descoqs intends to probe the Thomistic *phenomenon* to the bottom by seeking to discover the reasons of its immense success.

In determining these reasons, Ehrle does not fix his attention so much on the intrinsic goodness and truth which Thomistic doctrine unquestionably possesses, but rather asks himself in what manner, by what way, by the utilization of what materials of study, by the mastering of what criteria, St. Thomas was able to reach the heights of his synthesis. To answer these questions means precisely to determine the *Arbeitsart* of St. Thomas, that is, according to

[18] *Art. cit.*, pp. 180–181.

Ehrle, to discover what it particularly behooves us to learn from him for the purposes of renewing Scholasticism to-day.

In the opinion of this eminent historian and savant, Scholasticism, as we have seen, can be of value for modern times only on condition that it does not stop at the thirteenth century, but takes into account, besides St. Thomas, the Scholasticism of the nominalistic period and that of the sixteenth century which corrected and gave precision to the results of the old school. Nor is this all: to Ehrle's mind the formation of the scholar destined to labor for the renewal of traditional thought cannot be regarded as finished until he possesses an excellent knowledge of all modern speculation. In short, he demands for Scholasticism a fuller respiration in the wide world of the living, a mouthful of fresh air.[19]

[19] "This connection with the surrounding world of mental life and with the needs of ecclesiastical life will prevent that seclusion and stagnation which, by the witness of history, are always so harmful; and it will hold in readiness very valuable helps for the Church."—*Op. cit.*, p. 26. And on p. 32 he eloquently says: "Let us not, then, bury ourselves in the narrowness of our domesticity, but let us look around us where there is something to gain, something to avert, something to improve."—Cfr. Zybura, *op. cit.*, pp. 459–476.—Non-Scholastics likewise deplore this aloofness and give it as one of the reasons why Scholastic philosophy is so little known and appreciated; cfr. *ibid.*, pp. 18, 22, 107. sqq. (Tr.).

10. The Eclectic Process

Systems, then, must somehow pass away, even for the Scholastic, but only to rise again to a new and richer life through the negation they may encounter from other systems. For every systematization as such has a transient and temporal value only, while historical reality, through and in which truth is made or discovered and the Absolute gradually and variously shines and reveals himself, is always immeasurably richer.

The logical and necessary consequence of all this is that the eclectic process becomes indispensable in philosophy. This has been the process invariably adopted by the great thinkers. Notwithstanding, or rather because of, his very greatness, Aquinas made an extensive use of it.

This last assertion, not mine alone but also that of Ehrle,[20] is a noteworthy one. Noteworthy and significant, too, is the great importance which P. Descoqs attaches to the eclectic process. Here is his opinion on the subject of eclecticism: " . . . Eclecticism does not betoken a defect or a gap, but an eminently reasonable method, the only reasonable

[20] "Despite, or *rather because of* his pre-eminence, he [St. Thomas] lets none of the philosophical materials accessible to his time escape him. He conscientiously makes use of the Greek, Arabic, and Jewish philosophy. . . ." Ehrle, *op. cit.*, p. 8 (Italics mine).

one in philosophy; a method which was not only that of Suarez, but, above all, that of St. Thomas. This I have held and this I strongly maintain; for I take it that whoever has even the slightest acquaintance with the Angelic Doctor could not—without betraying ignorance of the thought and thinkers that preceded Aquinas—entertain the least doubt on this point: St. Thomas was a genius, but he was essentially an eclectic, appropriating the good wherever found, borrowing from the pagans as well as from the Fathers of the Church, from the Jews as well as from the Arabians, from believers as well as from the worst unbelievers—ready to bend all the resources of his marvelous intelligence on fusing these divers and frequently dissimilar elements into a harmonious synthesis." [21]

11. Historical Continuity

In this manner, loyal to a concept that answers ever more fully to historical reality, we are constrained to acknowledge that the better portion of the heritage bequeathed by the Middle Ages could he only partly and inadequately received and assimilated by those schools which quite frequently continued the bad habit of making syllogisms rather than philosophy. Whatever living values were left by the Middle Ages had of necessity to constitute

[21] *Art. cit.* in *Archives de Philosophie,* Vol. IV, p. 85.

the nourishment also, nay especially, of those forms of the new civilization that proved themselves more active, intrepid, and victorious. I mean to say that it must be shown how certain important expressions of modern civilization are inevitably indebted, in some manner and measure and for what is best in them, to medieval civilization, and that the latter likewise must needs see and extol in the former a continuation of itself across the centuries. What is alive, lives and transfuses itself again as so much life only in living organisms.

Scholasticism (and here I mean the Scholastic *system*), deeply decadent at the dawn of the fifteenth century because it had been remiss in the task of progressing,[22] to a great extent remained outside that vast and multiform living current of the new civilization in process of development. In a large measure Scholasticism constituted an anachronism, and as such it finally came to be regarded. Its heritage of glorious and immortal truth had to be transfused into this new current and particularly into that phase of it which could rise and develop itself because it had taken that truth—though not without disguises and errors—as the groundwork of its own progress, even when explicitly denying it.

[22] De Wulf likewise recognizes, as we have noted, that the lack of *originality* must be numbered among the causes of the decadence of Scholasticism.—Cfr. Zybura, *op. cit.*, p. 448 sqq.

The soul of Scholasticism, the immortal element in Scholasticism, had to continue its life and yield its fruits not so much in the bosom of the Scholastic system, shorn of its authority after the thirteenth century, as in the bosom of those combative anti-Scholastic philosophies [23] which none the less made the absurd claim of supplanting it: as a matter of fact they, too, partly drew their life from its life; by their diverse attitudes and even though unconsciously, they, too, in part invigorated themselves by its vitality through the byway of Greek thought. And hence it is that the eventual future of the Scholastic *system* must be sought especially in the bosom of the anti-Scholastic systems of modern speculation: it must be extracted, so to speak, chiefly from the heart of these same systems which have celebrated their triumphs and which, because they all have some manner and measure of value in the eyes of history, must have it also in the eyes of a system fundamentally true; for it, too, is bound by temporal conditions when constituting itself.

It is true that many of the modern systems ran

[23] "Vetera *novis* augere," as Leo XIII expressed it. And the *new* was assuredly not all comprised in the tradition of the Scholastic system, but especially in the anti-Scholastic current which had interrupted tradition or, more correctly speaking, was really the only one to provide for the continuation of tradition by its *novelties* (hardly ever unaccompanied by errors, if you will—but this in nowise detracts from my thesis).

their course with little or no preoccupation with the past; this, however, does not detract from the fact that in the very nature of things they represent, on one side at least, a return to the past which they so much abhorred, and on the other, mark a real progress in the history of thought.

The formation of the Scholastic system of the future, that is, of the system which would be destined to supplant all modern philosophy (or better, all the various *systems* of philosophy), will have to rise, if at all, as a living synthesis of all the conquests made in the various domains of knowledge by the most heterogeneous thinkers of the past and present, because the historical significance of modern philosophy as well as of the speculation of all times cannot, from the viewpoint of Scholastic metaphysics, be purely and simply anti-Scholastic.

12. The Synthesizing Process

The Scholastic thought of the future, the much presaged system of Scholasticism, will have to constitute itself as a synthesis, to the formation of which, as formerly to the formation of the sturdy systems of an Aristotle or a St. Thomas, many elements and many motives of the old and the new speculation will have to concur. With such an end in view we must surely look to the Neo-Scholastic

for a *certain* reconsecration of modern philosophy and civilization. That is to say, the anti-Scholastic character of this philosophy will have to receive its justification in the Scholastic sense, even though not a justification pure and simple. Similarly, on the part of Scholasticism there will come about the abandonment of certain positions or mentalities which to this very day were able to place obstacles in the way of its progress.

The Scholasticism of the future will neither be able to retain all of the old nor take in all of the new: conformably to its ontological postulates, its future lies in being wisely traditional and prudently progressive. For the concept of history justifiable by its metaphysics forbids it both to reduce history to a labor of Sisyphus, and to regard it as all ready-made like another Minerva who one fine day was able to spring fully armed from the head of Jove.

It is obvious that the Scholasticism which will achieve this work of renovation will be, and at the same time will no longer be, the Scholasticism of St. Thomas. That is, the Thomistic *system* will continue to live in this renewed Scholasticism up to a certain point. The renewal of Scholasticism must inevitably bring with it a certain abandonment of the Thomistic *system,* but not the abandonment of the soul that upholds and confers a high historical significance on the entire work of Aquinas. This

soul is immortal.[24] The glory of St. Thomas will not wane even before the Scholasticism of the future; but it is destined to receive another interpretation, unquestionably more true and more authentic than any hitherto given it.

It would be premature to say to-day in what should consist this rethinking of the Thomistic system which the Scholasticism of the future is to accomplish. It is but natural, nevertheless, that until the Neo-Scholastic movement has succeeded in determining itself and in acquiring a physiognomy of its own, there should always exist the current that prefers to remain literally attached to St. Thomas after the accustomed fashion. The official circles of the Church, without any intention of speaking *ex cathedra* on philosophy, will perhaps for a long time to come wisely continue to recommend Thomistic doctrine as a doctrine without danger to dogma (*tuta*), as the safer doctrine. But the rightful freedom which will be left to the progressive current will finally render superfluous many of those measures of prudence which to-day may seem excessive to many, but which, owing to the very immaturity of Neo-Scholastic thought, will, I dare say, continue

[24] In this it is like all souls, says Olgiati, which are complementary and not exclusive of one another. Cfr. his work on *L'Anima dell' Umanesimo e del Rinascimento* (Milan, 1924), p. 848 sq.—Cfr. also Olgiati-Zybura, *The Key to the Study of St. Thomas,* (St. Louis and London, 1925).

to recommend themselves to the responsible ecclesiastical authorities.

13. What should be the Historical Viewpoint of the Scholastic?

I repeat: should it be possible to revive Scholasticism by utilizing the ideas mentioned above, then the fact of its decadence, usually traced at least to the fifteenth century, would prove nothing against its vitality and its future mission in the world.

For the fact of this decadence of Scholasticism would not imply that the truths taught by it could not have been inherited by the modern world under another form and for other interests; that they could not have found a place in the bosom of the anti-Scholastic systems themselves.

Obviously, these systems can no longer inspire the more intelligent among the Scholastics with that sort of holy horror [25] which at the time of the Leonine restoration (Encyclical *Aeterni Patris*) took hold of many Catholic thinkers who, in the pardonable enthusiasm of the moment, believed their task finished by a hasty return to St. Thomas. This enthusiasm was not only pardonable but useful as well, because in a comparatively brief period it enabled us to revive the formidable synthesis of St. Thomas through numerous works, not always works of ge-

[25] Cfr. § 9, note 2.

nius, it is true, but for the most part profound. At any rate, this was the first indispensable step to that revival of Scholasticism which Leo had so much at heart.

Little by little that initial error is being corrected to-day, even by the most reactionary. The Scholastic now sets out to find his historical standpoint from which he may view and serenely appraise modern philosophy and civilization. And to the credit of truth be it said that the former distrust toward these latter, undoubtedly the result of misunderstanding, is now gradually disappearing. In the face of the modern world, Scholasticism's proper battle array, so to speak, was indicated by Gény when he wrote: "Two mistakes are possible: the exaggeration of its [Scholasticism's] difference from modern philosophy, or the undue attenuation of the same." [26]

That is to say, two errors are possible: the one proceeds from forming too feeble a concept of history in virtue of which there arises the tendency to strip history of its value, to sequester it from rationality and from God; the other derives from a too rigid concept of history in virtue of which one tends to identify truth with fact and hence to reduce everything to the same level.

And so those among the Scholastics who lay the blame for the decadence of Scholasticism on the

[26] Zybura, *op. cit.*, p. 161; also pp. 70, 107 sq., 113.

philosophers, and not at all on philosophy, come to an *impasse* because they deny the point of departure and the development of that philosophy which they wish to defend against modern thought. Because the universal is in the particular, the perfection of philosophic knowledge (and hence, for the Scholastic, the renewal of his system) cannot be understood as a *direct* approach to philosophy in itself (that is, divine wisdom), but as a utilization of the philosophy of philosophers, of the various systems of philosophy, living and unfolding themselves in history, which will always be likewise a way of approach of man to the wisdom of God, but in a manner suitable to our nature.

Outside of this way it is useless for Scholastic thought to look for its salvation. Outside of this life as it is lived, man cannot find the reason of his living.

The Scholastic who wishes to take his stand upon the fixedness of his system, as well as he who, while admitting progress, cannot see his way to celebrate its triumph in every period of history, ever ready instead to bewail its decline, brings himself to view his philosophy—so strongly inspired by Aristotle—with the prejudiced eye of Plato, to strip the individual of the universal, to reduce history to a movement without meaning, without necessity, placed entirely outside the plane of the Absolute.

It is the anti-historical vision that triumphs in them. Thus they come to miss that fundamental sense of optimism and realism which they should have inherited from Aristotle. The Scholastic who sets out to judge history should, in my opinion, always be guided by this idea, expressed by Chiocchetti: "As it is impossible to understand . . . the Absolute except on the basis of reality, so it is impossible to understand the moments of reality outside the light of the Absolute." [27]

It is imperative that the Scholastics take their stand fully, and without arbitrary limits, upon Vico's concept of history. The Scholastic who has not lost the sense of history and the idea of progress, and who does not wish to sequester truth from either, must acquire a vision that will allow him to see Scholasticism—in so far as it is for him a system of truth—in a certain manner effectively living the life which should rather be called its own, in those philosophies which are more abreast of the tendencies, the aspirations, the reality of to-day, and more determined to keep in touch with that reality which to some extent always remains to be discovered.

Then it will no longer be possible to designate as Scholasticism (that is, as a system of truth) the old one, the one which the Platonic extra-temporal mentality could raise to the heights of a *filia aeterni-*

[27] *La Filosofia di Benedetto Croce* (Milan, 1920), p. 286.

tatis, the one which stops short at Thomistic productions, the one which, without any sense of modernity, all shut up in the past (*ad mentem S. Thomae,* as it says, and bars for itself the way to an understanding of the Thomistic phenomenon), will continue to reproduce in everything and everywhere the traditional speculation. Instead, the name of Scholasticism (that is, a system of truth) will truly belong to that one which will take into account the conditions of the times of which it can then claim to express the soul; to that one which will prove its ability to rise to the dignity and value of a synthesis of modern life and culture. This one, and not the other, will be Scholasticism; that is, it will be possible to have faith in the perennial value of Scholasticism, in a *philosophia perennis,* only on condition that it proves itself capable of continual renewal, only on condition that it will be impossible to belie its effective capacity for rendering itself also a *filia temporis.*[28]

[28] Grabmann expresses the same thought: "Scholastic philosophy is largely determined by the transmission of intellectual material, by the influx of new sources, by the joint action of tradition and the independent penetration of traditional treasures of thought. It is precisely in this continuity of life and inheritance, in this organic and progressive unfoldment of previous fundamental doctrines of philosophy, that it manifests and proves itself as the *philosophia perennis.*" In John S. Zybura, *Present-Day Thinkers and the New Scholasticism* (2nd ed.), p. 132.

And it matters not that this eventual task of bringing up to date whatever is found imperishable in Scholasticism must be accomplished by a group of courageous men more or less officially appointed for the great undertaking. If the truths taught by the School are truths without adjectives, truths that will not suffer labels, they must rush into and penetrate every manifestation of life, and be affirmed directly or indirectly, implicitly or explicitly, by every system without exception. For this reason the Scholastic can, to a certain extent, take up every system as a teacher of truth. Not that his historical sense can reach an absolute optimism, but certainly a fundamental optimism, and in this sense, therefore, one that is always victorious in the end. While the Scholastic is unable to reach a pure and simple denial of error and evil, he must nevertheless always be able to affirm and see in them the orderly relation they necessarily have to truth and goodness. The Scholastic admits, of course, that free will makes it possible for man to do evil, to deny God and hence the absolute in history; but free will is not of a nature to free him from subjection to the Supreme Being and Creator. For the rest, a history that would nowise affirm God, should have to be regarded also by the Scholastic as outside of reality: such a history could not possibly exist; and it would then become impossible to ascribe to it the

good and evil people claim to find in it. It is necessary that all history affirm God and present itself as a theophany.

This conclusion has been reached by a Scholastic whose mind is always open to the noblest initiatives: "In a certain sense," he asserts, "all history is for us sacred history, because human activity, notwithstanding our freedom, does not escape the influence of Providence. . . ." [29]

Hence we must assert that not only *Scholastics* (more or less officially appointed) are called upon to provide for the defense of Scholasticism (as a true system), but also the so-called *anti-Scholastics,* and frequently in a more effectual manner. That is, we cannot imagine truth enclosed in a glass case labeled "Scholasticism." Truth is the life of all, and God is the Lord of all. Truth circulates more or less in every organism.

Surely, I could not speak in this manner unless

[29] Francesco Olgiati, *Religione ed Educazione,* in *Rivista di Filosofia Neo-Scolastica* (July–August, 1926), p. 213.—On his part, St. Thomas says more sublimely and precisely: "God is active in *every* operation. First, as an end; for, since every operation is for the sake of some real or apparent good (for nothing is or seems good unless it participates in the likeness of the supreme good, which is God), it follows that *God Himself is the cause and end of every operation.*"—*Summa Theol.* I ª, q. CV, art. 5.—Cfr. also my work on *Un Apologista della Provvidenza* (Rome, 1925), p. 41, note 53, where I quote this passage from St. Thomas.

I had adopted the viewpoint of Aristotelian ontology, thanks to which I find myself authorized to introduce a *real distinction* (the *distinctio realis* of the Scholastics) between *Scholastics* and *Scholasticism,* and to regard the latter (in so far as it is, *ex hypothesi,* a system of perennial truth) as not bound absolutely to the speculation of any Scholastic—even though he occupy the heights of genius, like St. Thomas—or to that of any other philosopher. Instead, and with much more reason, I shall regard the fortunes of Scholasticism as linked with the work of all philosophers, Scholastic and anti-Scholastic alike. That is to say, the vision with which the Scholastic must view history, cannot allow him to discern the vitality of his system outside of *time,* or to regard it as uprooted from *social conditions.*

Let my reader essay, for example, to write the history of thirteenth century philosophy, the golden age of Scholasticism. Unless he wishes to deserve the strictures hurled at some similar attempts, he must be able to show why the Thomistic synthesis, which unquestionably dominated that century, must be regarded as the result of a whole vast movement of ideas, as the outcome of the manifold speculative activity of thinkers who were followers of the most heterogeneous currents, yet all collaborators, more or less obscure and more or less conscious, in the one great work.

The only philosophy we can discuss is that of the philosophers. And hence the charges made against them will in every case and in some manner strike philosophy also, inasmuch as it must always be regarded as in the making (*in fieri*), even if this process is not to have the radical meaning assigned to it, for example, by the Hegelians. What is more, from the viewpoint of Scholastic Aristotelianism one can grant the concept of a *philosophia perennis* only on condition that the perennial character of Scholasticism is not restricted to indicate the immutability of some of its postulates and characteristics, but likewise signifies its capacity for continual renewal; in short, on condition that this perennial quality can show us, besides the perfect element (*esse*) of Scholasticism, the perfectible element (*fieri*). The concept of an immobile philosophy is absurd and therefore anti-Scholastic.

Just now the problem of Scholasticism is precisely that of demonstrating that its vitality is such as to be intelligible only on *historical* grounds. Gentile's demand: *"philosophia perennis,* yes; but on condition of always renewing itself," [30] can be accepted as a Scholastic axiom, provided this self-renewal is not to reduce history to a Sisyphean labor of continuous making and unmaking. For the rest, it seems that the Hegelian philosophy itself must abandon

[30] *Art. cit.*

this extreme concept; for if one should say: "but in that case the Hegelian philosophy condemns itself to vanish in the whirlwind of life," the idealistic philosopher would answer that Hegelianism must unavoidably suffer the fate of all other systems and be denied by another philosophy, but this negation must at any rate be such as to sublimate Hegelianism.[31] This means, if I mistake not, that there is here no question of a negation pure and simple, by which the other philosophy would put an end to Hegelianism; for this negation must in a certain sense also reaffirm it, if it is to constitute a sublimation of it.

This would mean that not even for idealism can the process of *fieri* be reduced to a sheer making and unmaking, and that not even for it is there a becoming for the mere sake of becoming, a becoming which for that reason would have to be understood as devoid of rationality and consequently also of finality (ateleological). As a matter of fact, Hegelian philosophy—on a par in this respect with Scholasticism—will likewise have to take its stand upon a fixed point existing in the history of civilization if it does not wish to see vanish under its very eyes even that concept of reality as pure actualism of thought which, in the worst supposition, will have to constitute the kernel, so to speak, of the future

[31] *Art. cit.*

systems, if these are to sublimate it. Here, too, there would be question of a sort of revenge, which the full and immobile world of Parmenides takes on the πάντα ῥεῖ of Heraclitus, and which, for the rest, does not lack its expression in the Heraclitean system itself in the concept of the divine law (θεῖος νόμος), which alone, immutable and eternal, had to govern all becoming.

As the concepts which we must have of truth, of our own reality, and of the reality of the world, cannot be reached outside of history or of nature, in short, outside of the particular, so, on the other hand, reality and truth cannot be understood as though they were left to the arbitrariness of the first comer. Aristotle was not a pure and simple negation of Plato; and so it is not reasonable to expect, against certain fundamental exigencies expressed by the Platonic and Aristotelian systems, further progress for thought in this direction.

Here we should note, however, that it is surely not this last viewpoint—namely, that of Plato, from which history must likewise be regarded—which, in my opinion, has hitherto been wanting to the Scholastic. When giving precision to the verdict of De Wulf concerning the causes of the decadence of Scholasticism and approaching that expressed by Gentile, I laid the blame for this decadence also on philosophy and used this occasion to point out the

anti-historical mentality of many Scholastics. This mentality, obviously also that of Scholasticism, continued to be strongly emphasized during the entire thirteenth century and after, notwithstanding the fact that the Aristotelian theory of the immanence of the universal in the particular had given a *new* direction to the noontide speculation of the Middle Ages, hitherto almost exclusively inspired by Plato.

As the more capable historians recognize, Plato, despite Aristotle, continued to exercise a great influence on medieval science, which cultivated metaphysics and the deductive method with predilection, to the great detriment of the experimental sciences and the analytic method. The mania for systematization assailed the whole thirteenth century. The true significance and reach of the revolution accomplished by Aristotelianism was very soon lost for Scholasticism, but not for all human thought which, outside the *cadres* of the School, was to welcome the heritage as the principle of its own renovation, even though it execrated and derided Aristotle.

Thus, for example, the Aristotelian theory that (in Scholastic parlance) *omnis cognitio incipit a sensu* was eventually limited to furnishing the point of departure of a demonstrative process; above all, to satisfying the exigencies of logical thought and the now acquired sense, if you will, of an elementary

experience; it was only moderately helpful in directing Scholastics to lay more solid foundations for metaphysics by the study of physics. Instead, the anti-Scholastic currents of the Renaissance were to find in that same theory their fundamental motive, as well as food for the crusade proclaimed in the name of empiricism by Francis Bacon against the hasty conclusions of the abstractive process. In a word, Scholasticism excessively emphasized the transcendent character of its truth, thus preparing the immanentistic reaction of modern philosophy. This reaction, beginning with the humanistic and naturalistic tendencies of the Italian Renaissance, and at once accentuating itself, now in the direction of materialism, now in that of idealism, attempted the conquest of all modern life down to our own day.

Such being the case, we can readily understand why Picavet deplores [32] the fact that medieval science had not promptly and resolutely set out on the way which Roger Bacon, boldly outstripping the times, pointed out to it in the thirteenth century. Picavet believes that a Scholasticism based on the

[32] In *Essais sur l'histoire générale et comparée des théologiens et des philosophes médievales* (Paris, 1913), pp. 283–294. (Picavet was the predecessor of Gilson at the Sorbonne).

direction indicated by Roger Bacon would have saved us from the anti-Scholastic spirit of Francis Bacon and of all modern philosophy, which in this manner would have been deprived of the initiative for renovating the thought of Western Europe. Thus I can also understand why Olgiati, one of our Neo-Scholastics, while always seeking strength and inspiration in St. Thomas and Greek thought, can hope for a complete resurrection of his system by giving Scholasticism a bath of *concreteness:* "We are Neo-Scholastics of the twentieth century," he says, writing to Zybura, "who propose to synthesize into one organic whole the immortal truths of pre-modern thinkers with the contributions made by modern times in the scientific and philosophical investigations of concreteness. Such is our programme, our method, our system. Such too, perhaps, is the battlefield on which will take place the philosophical engagements of the future." [33] This concreteness, Olgiati [34] hastens to add, is not opposed to abstraction, and constitutes the soul of the modern world.

This point of view evinces an intelligent grasp of the situation. It unquestionably represents the latest standpoint, not easy to supplant and still less to overcome, of the most recent Scholastic thought

[33] Zybura, *op. cit.,* pp. 299–300; *cfr. Rivista di Filosofia Neo-Scolastica* (January-February, 1925), p. 39.

[34] Cfr. especially, *L'Idealismo di Giorgio Berkeley e il suo significato storico* (Milan, 1926), pp. 56–65.

in regard to the problem of its history and of the history of post-medieval civilization.

Scholasticism must at length feel the need of somehow meeting the exigency which spurs modern thought and civilization on to a richer and more fruitful unity. By overcoming the negation of dispersion in which the Neo-Platonic speculation of the first Christian centuries had ended, medieval thought and civilization reached a more intelligible unity with St. Thomas Aquinas and the Aristotelianism of the School. In response to a need of the times, now greatly changed, the human mind, after having affirmed with Plato the *origin* of life *as it is in itself,* came down to earth with Aristotle to meditate more profoundly on itself as a degree of participation in Reality. Dualism, condemned to remain without a justification in Plato, became intelligible in Aristotle, and thus for the first time, we may say, combined into a certain unity. Through the Scholastic speculation of the thirteenth century modern thought must be all directed toward an ever greater understanding of this insuppressible dualism, and be all intent on explaining the presence of the idea on earth, on enriching the unity achieved by the Stagirite, on welcoming concreteness; in other words, it must seek to transform itself into a thought increasingly richer and more concrete. And, as a matter of fact, whenever some rare author on the

Scholastic side understood how to approach this exigency of our times, a unanimous welcome was never lacking. Books, for example, like those of Sertillanges, Rousselot, Gilson, Maritain, Chiocchetti, Maréchal, and others, are read with pleasure and profit.

For these and similar works have the sterling worth of *modernity*. If modernity, absolutely speaking, cannot—on the basis of the metaphysical principles of the School—be regarded as synonymous with *truth,* the latter at any rate cannot be dissevered from the former, but in some manner and measure must always accompany it. We may say that truth is made (or discovered) on condition that there be something new, for it is precisely in this making (or discovering) of truth that the novelty in question ultimately consists.

Even without intending, as I have said, to reach a pure and simple confusion of fact with truth, it must be admitted that while the undeniable decadence of Scholastic thought does not yet furnish an infallible proof of its falsity, it none the less falls short of acquitting it of all blame. It is high time to realize that the character of *modernity* of a philosophy—that is, the correspondence of a given system to the needs and aspirations of the modern world—is, in its deeper aspects, a character that

must be regarded as indissolubly connected with the very truth of that philosophy.[35]

How, for example, can the historian successfully separate in St. Thomas the character of modernity from the hitherto unattained degree of scientific seriousness which his whole vast work reveals? All the *novelties* which the biographer of Aquinas mentions—novelties alike of method and content[36]—

[35] My assertion of the existence of this problem was always denied, for example by P. Gény; but I find it affirmed to some extent in his posthumous article in the *Gregorianum* (March, 1926, p. 154). See also what he wrote to Zybura, *op. cit.*, pp. 161–176, where he at least recognizes that Scholasticism to-day can no longer claim to represent the synthesis of European thought. It was the shadow of this problem that weighed heavily on the First International Thomistic Congress held in Rome in April, 1925. A glance at the subjects treated (*Acta Primi Congressus Thomistici Internationalis,* Rome, 1925), will suffice to convince one of this. The same preoccupation is betrayed in the numerous publications which appeared on the occasion of the Thomistic centenary.

[36] "He was wont to raise *new* questions in his lectures; discovering a *new* and clear way of determining matters and bringing out *new* reasons in the determinations, so that no one who heard him teaching *new* doctrines and defining doubts by *new* reasons, doubted that God illumined him with the rays of a *new* light, since he straightway displayed such sure judgment that he did not hesitate to teach and write about *new* opinions of which God deigned to give him a new inspiration." —*Acta Sanctorum* for March 7, chap. 3, n. 15 (Brussels, 1668), p. 663.—The same biographer (*loc. cit.*, chap. 4, n. 18, p. 665) calls the *Summa Contra Gentiles* a work "profound by

constituted almost so many conquests for science. Throwing off the preoccupations peculiar to the Platonic-Augustinian wisdom of the noontide of the Middle Ages, and making due contact with the entire civilization and culture of his time, St. Thomas founded the *new* Scholastic science, which achieved its triumphant success only because he successfully made of it a vast work bringing up to date and synthesizing all knowledge.

14. An Attempt of Genius

To-day Scholasticism obviously faces the problem of a more or less profound revision, the vastness, reach, and nature of which I have here intentionally refrained from examining. That revision, however, must be such as could not well be comprised in the scant and over-simple terms of the Leonine formula, *"vetera novis augere,"* unless this formula were interpreted and rendered effective in the sense

the *novelty* and subtlety of its arguments."—Tolomeo da Lucca writes: "At that time brother Thomas, while a teacher in Rome, composed almost the entire philosophy of Aristotle, both natural and moral, and reduced it to writing or a treatise, displaying especially a certain singular and *new* way of teaching ethics and metaphysics."—*Historia Ecclesiastica,* l. 23, c. 24 (Muratori, *Scriptores Rerum Italicarum,* XI, 1155).—Cfr. also, A. Masnovo, *Le novità di S. Tommaso,* in *Pubblicazioni dell' Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore,* Series I, Vol. XI (Milan, 1923), pp. 41–50.

given it, for example, by Sertillanges,[37] who notes the difference between *augere* and *addere,* or in the meaning given it by Gemelli,[38] who rejects the word "adaptation" and speaks of *assimilation*—in short, in the meaning to which considerable attention has been devoted in the present chapter.

Thus the Scholasticism of modern civilization and thought has been confronted with the historical problem, the solution of which is for it a question of life or death. Scholasticism must be able to prove that the fact of its decadence in the history of the modern world did not mean a pure and simple negation of its principles; but rather, that this very history is working, *bon gré mal gré,* to prepare a new and richer synthesis of its thought. If this were not so, *"if modern philosophy really had this value,"* as Olgiati says in his polemic against certain of his friends with an extra-temporal mentality, "of having superseded ancient and medieval thought and substituted the subject for the object, monism for dualism, immanence for transcendence, how could a Catholic Scholastic ever accept the "soul" of modern philosophy?" [39] Evidently, then, Olgiati would stand aghast at the mentality of those Scholastics

[37] *Op. cit.,* Vol. II, p. 333.

[38] *S. Tommaso d'Aquino,* in *Pubblicazioni,* etc., Series I, Vol. XI (Milan, 1923), pp. 32–33.

[39] In *Rivista di Filosofia Neo-Scolastica* (January–April, 1925).

who, for instance, could put forth the following judgment on modern philosophy: "Of a truth, it fills one with pity and horror, this swarm of modern systems, rehashed as they are for the most part from the old and putrid remnants of Lucretius and Epicurus, Campanella and Giordano Bruno,—rhapsodies of threadbare fragments, patchworks of foreign wares;" [40] at the mentality that could define modern philosophy as being neither more nor less than a "vertiginous delirium of human thought" and a "phrenetic aberration of ideas." [41] Olgiati, as I have good reason for asserting, is far from repeating these scandals among the Scholastics; so far, indeed, that he maintains that it is imperative for Scholastic thought to re-bless and reconsecrate four or five centuries of history. And woe to the Scholastic and the Catholic if this should prove in no way possible! "We have a mind to smile," he says playfully, "when we hear some good Catholics proclaim that the historical significance of modern philosophy lies in immanence. What next? If this were the value of the truth of modern speculation, nothing would be left for us but to desert Catholicism and enlist with the Idealists!" [42] In what, then,

[40] *L'Accademia Romana di S. Tommaso d'Aquino, Dissertazioni degli Accademici lette nell' anno 1893,* p. 9.

[41] *Op. cit.,* pp. 9–10.

[42] In *Rivista di Filosofia Neo-Scolastica* (January–February, 1926). p. 61.

does this value consist? What is this "soul" of modern speculation and civilization which Olgiati does not disdain to embrace? I will endeavor to give a résumé of his thought, and invite my readers to go directly to the author's writings [43] for fuller information.

From the separated forms of Plato the process of thought, following a line of natural development, brought with Aristotle the consideration of forms as immanent in the individual. Aristotle drew the forms from individual reality: from the *abstractionism* of the Platonic process the way was thus found to the Aristotelian process of *abstraction.* With Aristotle the existence of the forms had a justifying basis, an explanation. The philosophy of Aristotle, received and elaborated by the Middle Ages after they had traversed the Platonic period, marks a distinct advance in the history of Christian thought. It should be pointed out, however, that the philosophy of Aristotle together with the Scholas-

[43] See the long discussion on abstraction and concreteness which developed in the *Rivista di Filosofia Neo-Scolastica* during 1919 and 1920, *passim;* F. Olgiati, *La Storia della filosofia moderna e la neoscolastica italiana,* in the same review, fasc. 1 & 2, 1925; *Il significato storico della filosofia moderna, ibid.,* fasc. 1, 1926, pp. 56–62; *L'Anima dell' Umanesimo e del Rinascimento* (Milan, 1924); *L'Idealismo di Giorgio Berkeley e il suo significato storico* (Milan, 1926), pp. 56 sq.; English-speaking readers will find an exposition of Olgiati's viewpoint in Zybura, *op. cit.,* pp. 276–300.

tic Aristotelianism of the thirteenth century remains for all that the philosophy of forms, where the form dominates the whole system and the determination of the form represents the most significant effort to which speculation is directed. After this effort was exhausted, human thought as early as the beginning of the fourteenth century turned especially to the knowledge of the particular. One of the first clear manifestations of this new direction or of the gigantic proportions of this new exigency is seen in the bosom of Scholasticism itself, in Nominalism. The latter, however, did not succeed in placing Scholasticism at the head of the movement now beginning; on the contrary, it contributed in many ways to hasten the decadence of Scholastic thought. Outside the old framework within which Scholasticism had hoped to imprison thought, the new direction of speculation and the new interest aroused by life made rapid progress. Olgiati does not, of course, deny the importance of this revolution: *contra factum non valet illatio;* but he does deny that it can be explained in the immanentistic sense. In the name of concreteness, therefore, which he regards as the soul of all modern thought and civilization, he challenges every other interpretation heretofore given to the history of that thought and civilization. The interest of the modern world, he asserts, is oriented *principally* toward concreteness,

that is, toward a richer knowledge and a more adequate theoretical and practical appraisal of being. Because it dominates the modern soul and civilization, the desire for concreteness is the factor that furnishes the explanation of their various attitudes and results.

With this fact in view, therefore, it is of great interest to know the relations it is purposed to establish between the concept of abstraction and that of concreteness. How is the Scholastic to understand them? Do abstraction and concreteness signify two "souls," two methods, in themselves opposed to each other? Neither from the theoretical nor from the historical viewpoint can this question be answered in the affirmative. If abstraction was the soul of medieval philosophy and civilization, it is obvious that concreteness, the soul of modern philosophy, cannot be regarded as a negation of the abstractive process without bringing the Neo-Scholastic back to that anti-historical mentality from which he seeks a definitive escape. Abstraction and concreteness must meet as friends: the medieval period must find a way of becoming united to the modern; the soul of each epoch must seek to arrive at a mutual understanding. For it is not part of the Neo-Scholastic programme to overlook the viewpoint of historical continuity from which facts and theories must be judged.

Abstraction and concreteness cannot stand for two processes in themselves antithetical. Their opposition cannot find a theoretical justification; it can assume a meaning and boast a vindication only on the historical terrain.

For of itself thought tends to grasp reality, to attain its cognitive end by means of the twofold process of abstraction and concreteness. Every being results from a universal and a particular: knowledge, which consists in the *adaequatio rei et intellectus,* enables the mind to grasp the universal, one part of the thing, by means of the abstractive process, that is, by separating it *intentionaliter* from the particular; while the other part of the thing, the particular, becomes known by way of the process of concreteness. Only the integral use of the one and the other process can gradually furnish a perfect knowledge of the object.

The universal, *in so far as it is universal,* is in the intellect; it has no existence in itself; it does not exist apart from the particular. Hence a true and full knowledge of a thing cannot be reached through the abstractive process alone, that is, solely through the process which grasps the universal in the thing: this process, indispensable for such knowledge, must be completed by the process that aims to grasp what is individual and particular in the thing and by which alone it is this or that thing, a

thing not to be confused with others. Abstraction is a process which comes to know the real no less truly than does concreteness, because the thing in itself is not individuality without a nature, multiplicity without unity, matter without form, and so on. The knowledge of the thing through the universal, while always necessary for the very knowledge of whatever is particular in the thing, is nevertheless a poor and inadequate knowledge when taken alone. The world, reduced to a mere hierarchy of forms, would be a very tiresome world indeed, a world without color and life. The richness and the life of the world are discovered especially by the knowledge of being in so far as it is individual.

Are there, then, two processes, two methods, two souls in this matter of human knowledge? If I have understood Olgiati correctly, and after what has been said here concerning abstraction and concreteness, I can answer this question conclusively by pointing out that the human mind, being relative and hence incapable of bearing the very intensity of the effort involved in the knowledge and mastery of reality —that is, in the knowledge and mastery of reality as nature and of reality as individuality—has recourse to the expedient of emphasizing at one time the use of the abstractive process, at another the use of the process of concreteness; now considering being especially in so far as it is universal, now regarding

it particularly in so far as it is individual. Fundamentally the human mind tends to the *total* comprehension and mastery of being, that is, to the knowledge of being as both universal and particular. Indeed, every cognition of reality always reveals the presence of the abstractive process and of the process of concreteness. But the mind cannot satisfy this initial and, so to speak, native tendency except *historically,* and therefore by degrees, and hence not without enfeebling the one process when the other is being over-accentuated. Thus all human history (thought and action), as well as the life of every man, oscillates between the two poles of abstraction and concreteness, everlastingly unsatisfied with itself.

This vision of history and of life cannot be accused (as some have accused it) of over-simplification. To the charge that this view is too simple, we may answer that it is indeed simple in its general lines; but then an explanation of the world must always be such. However, it is exceedingly rich as regards the particulars: concreteness and abstraction are to be found in all fields of human activity, which are the most diversified and take on a different color and tone according to the individuals, the society and the times in which these individuals develop their thought and action. Finally, it should again be recalled that concreteness and abstraction are processes

representative of interests and tendencies which are not by nature separable *sic et simpliciter;* that, moreover, when Olgiati speaks of a period, an epoch, a civilization as attuned to concreteness or abstraction, he only means that said period, epoch, or civilization displays the one or the other as a *characteristic* and a *salient* feature. Hence, in virtue of this last observation which implies that the right interpretation of historical facts is not easy, Olgiati's conception does not deserve the charge of oversimplification made against it.

However, I believe there is some force in the following observation offered by Canon Pasquale Naddeo to our eminent Neo-Scholastic: ". . . Modern philosophy, having turned to study the reality of nature, history, and the mind by means of the positive scientific method which you call the method of concreteness, ended by shutting itself up in that reality, by seeking the reason of the latter not outside, but within natural reality itself, thus falling into complete immanentism. Transcendence and immanence represent two systems, two conceptions, two souls antithetical to each other in the highest degree. Here, if I mistake not, lies the fundamental, the essential difference between pre-modern and modern philosophy." [44]

[44] F. Olgiati, *Il significato storico della filosofia moderna,* in *Rivista di Filosofia Neo-Scolastica,* fasc. I, 1926, pp. 57–58.

Olgiati cannot well admit this "essential difference" between the medieval and the modern epoch, because from his point of view he cannot grant that the *historical significance* [45] of the Middle Ages is transcendence and that of modern civilization immanence.

It is true that modern philosophy issued in an immanentistic conception in the most absolute sense of the word: but for him this fact signifies concreteness, not immanence.

In other words, according to Olgiati we find ourselves in the presence of a fact, the fact of the effective direction towards concreteness; it stands there to prove to what extent were frustrated the intentions of the philosophers who constructed the various systems of immanence and exalted in immanence the new interest of life.

But even if we grant all this, it still remains for Olgiati to explain—to the partial justification of Naddeo—how the fact of these immanentistic theories could have come to pass despite the direction of the modern mind, oriented in reality and, against the very intentions of the various thinkers, toward concreteness and not toward immanence.

This fact, it seems to me, cannot be satisfactorily explained except by recognizing that the predominantly concrete direction of modern civilization, by

[45] Cfr. *art. cit.*

enriching to an extraordinary degree the cultural and scientific patrimony of humanity, by successfully transferring the interests of man from Heaven (where the Middle Ages preferred to confine them) to earth, by setting out and persisting as a worldly tendency and wisdom (*Weltweisheit*), could finally produce an exaggerated appraisal of man and of the world inhabited by man—the two direct objects of the new science, the two centres to which the new interest of civilization gravitated.[46] From the enthusiasm aroused for the microcosm during the humanistic period, the transition was made to enthusiasm for the macrocosm in the Renaissance period, until the systems of the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries, by retouching these motives, finally issued in absolute immanence. So it came to pass that when modern man, after the period of Humanism and the Renaissance, wished to express his interest in systematic, philosophic form (which interest, according to Olgiati, is that of concreteness), he fell into immanentistic theories. Now this is a fact that calls for an explanation.

By itself, surely, the process of concreteness cannot lead to immanence. Concreteness, as understood by the Scholastic, is something else than immanence. But because concreteness is a process that aims to grasp the reality which is effectual in history, the

[46] Cfr. Zybura, *op. cit.*, Part III, Chap. I & II.

particular in being, that is, the fact of its origin, development and, in short, of its activities, it naturally polarizes the attention of our intelligence on the richness and value of this mortal world, thus favoring an over-valuation of it wholly peculiar to the immanentistic conception, which seeks the explanation of life not *outside,* but simply *within* this world. If this observation were without value, we should have to ask why a civilization like the medieval, predominantly oriented toward abstraction, had not systematized its knowledge according to an immanentistic tendency; and why another civilization (the modern) prevailingly oriented toward concreteness, finally expanded into a great variety of immanentistic doctrines. In other words, we must recognize that if the tendency oriented toward the concreteness of the modern world does not of itself suffice to justify, as Olgiati notes, the vigorous flourishing of so many immanentistic systems, these latter must none the less have found in that tendency a mentality favorable to their rise and development. The Scholastic is constrained to assume that the immanence of modern philosophy is at least a degeneration, quite easy to verify, of the spirit of concreteness.[47] If this spirit constitutes the modern

[47] While correcting the proof-sheets of the present work, there came to my notice an article by Chiocchetti on *Un libro di Mons. Olgiati su Giorgio Berkeley* (in *Rivista di Filosofia Neo-Scolastica,* March–June, 1927), in which I found a part

soul, we must find in it the explanation of the great facts of history; it is impossible for these facts to have developed outside the spirit of concreteness, and the numerous immanentistic systems must in some way be connected with this same spirit.

As abstractionism is not the same thing as abstraction, so immanentism is not the same as concreteness. But as abstraction, a characteristic of the medieval period, could end in abstractionism, so concreteness, a mark peculiar to the modern epoch, could issue in immanentism. If degenerations, like abstractionism and immanentism, must appear logically unjustifiable, we are nevertheless forced to acknowledge that on the historical terrain they found conditions most favorable to their rise, the one in the medieval direction toward abstraction, the other in the modern tendency toward concreteness. Just as

of this observation of mine confirmed: "From Descartes to our time philosophy has sought to bring cosmic reality into the interior of man, to spiritualize it, to translate it into logical relations, or into facts of sentiment, or into acts of the will and the intellect. We have only to recall Descartes, Locke, Hume, Kant, Fichte, Hegel, the Neo-Hegelians, Bergson. That they did not succeed in making all reality subjective is another matter . . . But the attempt was there and is there and, as methodology, permeates all the philosophies from Descartes to the present day . . . Perhaps at bottom Olgiati and I do not say things so very differently. Probably his concreteness is the spiritual concreteness (p. 222) . . . Concreteness? Yes, but through and by making nature subjective in the mind." (p. 223).

the medieval period, because oriented chiefly toward abstraction, could never have degenerated into immanentism, so the modern period, because oriented mainly toward concreteness, could never have offered to the abstractionist mentality the hisorical clime most suitable for its rise and development.

15. The Maturity of the Italian Neo-Scholastics

It remains for me to point out somewhat more clearly how the Italian Neo-Scholastics, with Gemelli at their head, have given palpable proof of being fully conscious—thanks, above all, to the influence exercised upon them by Croce and Gentile—of this truth: history possesses a value not only as a *magistra vitae,* but also as a *magistra veritatis.*[48] They are assiduously at work on attempts to make their own Bruno's concept of the *historical character of the idea.* It is well known that in his work on *La Filosofia di Giovanni Gentile,* Chiocchetti praised *apertis verbis* the historical sense manifested by the idealistic philosopher; while in his preceding work on *La Filosofia di Benedetto Croce* he had taken occasion to make some excellent observations on the concept of history. Then followed the first attempts to interpret the history of philosophy in a Scholastic sense. Thus, for example, after his work

[48] Cfr. Agostino Gemelli, *Il mio contributo alla filosofia neoscolastica* (Milan, 1926), pp. 65–81.

on the "soul" of St. Thomas,[49] Olgiati endeavors to show us the "soul" of Humanism and the Renaissance,[50] and then gives us an essay on the idealism of George Berkeley and its historical significance,[51] while promising us various other works on the interpretation of modern philosophy, all inspired by the same criterion.

By these and other works every one can verify what a great distance separates many in the Neo-Scholastic camp from the incurably anti-historical mentality of the author of the work *Il Veleno Kantiano*[52] (The Kantian Venom), otherwise a man of profound intelligence and a conspicuous representative of an entire school of thought which in the bosom of Scholasticism continues to show a force that must be taken into account.

In the pages of the *Rivista di Filosofia Neo-Scolastica* there was discussed and is being discussed to-day the problem of the relations between history and philosophy. The Italian Neo-Scholastics also look up to Vico; after the short essays in the *Rivista,* there appeared on the occasion of his cen-

[49] *L'Anima di S. Tommaso,* Milan, 1923. Translated by Zybura under the title, *The Key to the Study of St. Thomas* (St. Louis and London, 1925).

[50] *L'Anima dell' Umanesimo e del Rinascimento,* Milan, 1925.

[51] *L'Idealismo di Giorgio Berkeley ed il suo significato storico,* Milan, 1926.

[52] Guido Mattiussi, S.J., *Il Veleno Kantiano* (Rome, 1914).

tenary a commemorative volume, prepared by the Catholic University of the Sacred Heart at Milan.[53] And if I am correctly informed, we shall soon have a complete monograph on Vico. Finally, a dissertation on the concept of history in Scholastic thought [54] by Professor Silvio Vismara, betokens the efforts being made on the Scholastic side to solve the pressing problem in its theoretical terms and in a manner worthy of the traditional speculation.

If the Neo-Scholastic movement follows the course mapped out by Olgiati—which course I consider the most logical, without, however, declaring myself here on the value of the particular results hitherto obtained—I will be glad to attest that Scholasticism has been converted to the *method* which has found special favor with its adversaries. Apart from certain immoderate features unable to prejudice it, it is a method which appears to me the only one that is justifiable: we must either advance by means of this method or renounce all progress.

16. Against the Anti-Metaphysical Idol

By having embraced in its entirety the historical method pointed out to them by the most conscien-

[53] *G. B. Vico, Volume commemorativo del secondo centenario della pubblicazione della "Scienza Nuova"* (Milan, 1926).

[54] *Il Concetto della Storia nel Pensiero Scolastico,* Milan, 1924. Cfr. my review of it in the *Rivista Internazionale di Scienze Sociali* (November, 1924), pp. 271–273.

tious thinkers of all times, the Italian Neo-Scholastics hold, so to speak, the master-key which will give them access to the understanding of the modern world, assure for traditional thought the reasons and conditions of its future, and confer an inestimable benefit on philosophic thought in general. They are but continuing the methodological tradition of their master, St. Thomas Aquinas. They are but giving an increasingly intelligent interpretation to the Leonine Encyclical *Aeterni Patris,* an understanding of it already clearly emphasized by Ehrle since 1918, in his pamphlet, *Grundsätzliches zur Charakteristik der neueren und neuesten Scholastik.* In fine, they crown the work of the Louvain school and of all those researchers who devoted themselves especially to rethinking the old theses of Aristotelian-Thomistic metaphysics in relation to modern problems, without, however, having yet reached a fully adequate vision of the historical significance of the latter.

Before concluding I wish to give additional precision to the significance and reach which the new and integral view of history inaugurated by the Italian Neo-Scholastics can have for the Scholastics in general, and to which view the present work hopes to make some contribution.

In the preceding pages special pains have been taken to bring out, above all, the need for Scholas-

tic thought to acquire a concept of history as a *history that is productive of the rational,* as a history which is *magistra veritatis,* and to become familiar with Bruno's concept of the *historical character of the idea.* But perhaps it will not be superfluous to emphasize once more that I never expressed myself in an absolute manner on these kindred concepts. They must be understood in function of other concepts likewise repeatedly explained in this work: they cannot be detached, for example, from the concept of *historical continuity;* nor from that which upholds the impossibility of reducing *all* history to a Sisyphean labor; nor from that which takes its stand upon the value of Aristotelian philosophy as being also Platonic, and upon Thomistic philosophy as being also Augustinian; nor from many other concepts of a similar nature. In other words, it was never declared possible for the Scholastic to appropriate Bruno's concept of the historical character of the idea purely and simply. Nor was mention ever made of a desire to reduce, *tout court,* philosophy to the history of philosophy.

To some extent philosophy reduces itself to history: surely, my philosophy must also be regarded as a product of history; in me are reflected the efforts made by other thinkers: isolated, I could never have reached my present position. It is not given us to discover the eternal except in the tem-

poral, to discover the immutable and the absolute except in the movement and contingency of history. It is a fact that even though our eyes are directed beyond the horizon of this life of phenomena, we nevertheless remain as if immersed in it. It would be absurd, therefore, to imagine the possibility of taking absolute leave of the historical terrain. Do what we will, the relative, the contingent abides in us; we were not endowed with the faculty of directly contemplating the eternal essences: only by passing through this world of generation and corruption is it given us to attain to the beauty of the Idea—just as it would be absolutely necessary to traverse our atmosphere in order to reach the sun. Once all this has been recognized, it would be absurd to wish to *separate* philosophy from the history of philosophy. This should be emphasized and clearly understood.

But if all this is abidingly and perfectly true, it is likewise quite true that history cannot be reduced to a mere making and unmaking. History does not begin its woof at every moment, and cannot be reduced to pure movement. I have already referred to the dependence of the life of our thought on the thought of others; I have frequently pointed out the *social* character of knowledge and the task to be accomplished by systems in the discovery of truth, with the aim of showing the contingent conditions

in which our knowledge is agitated and worked out. However, not all that is seen in the contingent is contingent; not all that is perceptible only in time is temporal. In view of the actual conditions and needs of Scholastic thought, special effort has been made in the present work to bring out in strong relief the concept of history as the *producer of the rational,* thus combating the mentality of those Scholastics who claim that after St. Thomas history has nothing or very little to reveal to us. The standpoint of these Scholastics, however, is only relatively anti-historical and contains an understanding of history that must not be overlooked. This standpoint avows the concept of history also as eternal history, as an immutable expression of the immutable divine idea; while, on the contrary, the violently anti-Scholastic tendencies of the Humanism-Renaissance period, by boasting of having initiated wholly new eras in the history of civilization, by parading their disdain for the Middle Ages, by claiming to have severed all connections with the traditions of that period,[55] deserve to be regarded as attempts at revolution, not evolution, manifesting as they do a well defined anti-historical sense which aimed to sequester history from necessity, from the divine. As long as European thought tarried, with the Scholastics, in repeating the past, and with the anti-Scholas-

[55] Cfr. Zybura, *op. cit.,* pp. 483 sq., 495 sq., 506 sq.

tics in seeking ever new ways without knowing how to utilize adequately the results of medieval speculation, or limited itself to constructing powerful systems as results of an effort that was largely personal and too meagerly social, so long did it fail to find the reason and the true conditions for its progress. The anti-historical mentality reigned supreme in all European thought, Scholastic and anti-Scholastic alike, at least until Hegel, who finally directed an entire generation of philosophers to a more adequate understanding of history. The numerous works on the history of philosophy which have been appearing for a century, indicate a greatly changed mentality and represent the preliminary labor for that philosophic synthesis to which all our efforts are directed.

According to this renewed historical mentality, all systems of philosophy are to be regarded as immortal in a certain sense and measure, in so far, namely, as all participate in one and the same truth. The fact that we have been endowed with the faculty of participating in all these systems, of utilizing the results they obtained, leads me to conclude that there must exist a Thought in which all men participate, a Thought outside the economy of which we can no longer hope to reach even the concept of history as contingent. There is one part of human thought that cannot be reduced to the movement of

history: there is a philosophy among philosophies, *the* philosophy, the thought of God, which consumes all false and lying philosophies. *Est quaedem philosophia perennis,* even in this contingent world of ours. This philosophy, I repeat, can never and nowise be confused with any particular system of philosophy, no, not even with the Scholastic *system.* History always tells us of this perennial philosophy which permeates all systems. History, all history, may also be described as a manifestation, and a diverse manifestation, of the Idea. May we, then, say that the Idea, too, is made and is itself subject to change? Yes, the Idea also becomes, in so far as it manifests itself variously in time: we must maintain a historical character of the Idea which concerns the intelligibility for us of the Idea itself. But is not the Idea by its very definition immutable? Surely, by its definition the Idea is immutable, and with its character of immutability it manifests itself also in history, inasmuch as it is always the same Idea that variously manifests itself: and thus it is history. Two mentalities may therefore be regarded as hostile to this concept of history: the mentality which tends to separate from this concept that of becoming and to regard history as a history ready-made, once for all, thus obscuring the concept of history as a *diverse* participation in the divine Idea (the pseudo- or ultra-metaphysical mentality); and

the mentality that tends to bedim the understanding of history as a participation in the *same* divine Idea, and thus to regard history as a course always to be gone over again (the anti-metaphysical mentality). That is, there are two enemies antagonizing the true concept of history: the *ultra-metaphysical idol* and the *anti-metaphysical idol.*

The ultra-metaphysical idol is avowedly dear to those Scholastics who proudly claimed that human thought had come to a standstill with St. Thomas, and in this way gently dispensed themselves from embarking on the *mare magnum* of modern thought and civilization. The anti-metaphysical idol was openly cherished by those intransigent anti-Scholastics of the modern era who haughtily pretended to be able to dispense with the past as an aid to the success of their efforts.

But we are not to imagine that the two different anti-historical standpoints just mentioned are enemies easy to subdue. The danger of their revival lurks in all thinking, even the most accurately controlled, and they seem fated to remain almost impregnable. Thus, to make a simple supposition, the anti-metaphysical mentality can be said to find favor not only with those who would speak of the historical character of the idea *sic et simpliciter,* but I see it latent also in an eventual standpoint of those Neo-Scholastics who are inclined to over-emphasize

the novelty represented by the understanding of history fostered by the Italians, and expect too much from what is unquestionably the most intelligent and integral direction taken by their researches. The character of novelty represented by the standpoint of the young school of Gemelli would be excessively stressed by all who did not give due prominence to the advances made in the understanding of history, particularly during the last decades, by the Scholastics themselves, especially those of Belgium, France, and Germany;[56] in this way they would fail to understand this character of novelty in function of the other one of continuity which, in my opinion, must likewise be included in the direction taken by the Italian Neo-Scholastics with respect to the other Neo-Scholastic tendencies of Europe. Only by neglecting to take this character duly into account would it be possible to discredit those thinkers who are penetrating ever more deeply into the metaphysical theses of Scholasticism by availing themselves of the historical researches already made, and to

[56] The frequently cited work of John S. Zybura presents an excellent statement of this progressive understanding of history by the Scholastics; the invariably opportune foot-notes of the author are of a nature to stimulate more ample and specific researches. Besides, no one should overlook the personal contribution made by Zybura himself to this same understanding of history in Part III entitled, *Scholasticism and the Period of Transition,* and *Status and Viewpoint of the New Scholasticism,* pp. 371–521 (2nd ed., 1927).

call into question the usefulness of their labors. For these thinkers are engaged on problems already historically stated and historically sifted, and they represent an understanding of history which deserves to be regarded as mature when compared with that of so many Scholastics of a few years ago. On the other hand, the results looked for from the integral application of the historical method as understood especially by the Italians, will themselves some day surely be subjected to a revision and accounted incomplete. Precisely this is still happening, after so many centuries, to Aristotle himself and to his appraisals of the philosophy that preceded him.

In view of the actual state of historical research I am finally inclined to hold that the greatest benefit we can expect from the direction taken by the Italian Neo-Scholastics is that of reaching such an understanding of what has been called the *historical significance* of modern philosophy as will enable us to infer therefrom the vitality of Scholasticism in the very midst of our civilization. But what is meant by *historical significance?* And what does the search for this historical significance necessarily imply? We have already lingered too long in explaining what we mean by it, and further elucidations seem superfluous.

As regards the history of modern philosophy and civilization, Olgiati believes he has individuated the

historical significance in the aspiration to *Scholastic* concreteness; in other words, in the aspiration to that concreteness which leaves the metaphysical dualism of the School unshaken; while Croce, for example, who also emphasized this mark of concreteness in modern speculation [57] some time before Olgiati, claimed that it was codified in his system of immanence. The historical significance of modern philosophy, according to Croce, is the concreteness Scholastic thought is incapable of satisfying and expressing in an adequate measure: it is the concreteness which, in his judgment, can find no place in the framework of the old metaphysic and constitutes the condemnation of this same metaphysic. The concreteness meant by Croce would postulate a metaphysic other than the Scholastic, the metaphysic of Neo-Hegelianism in opposition to the metaphysic of being of St. Thomas. In the opinion of the Italian idealists all history has annulled the Scholastic conception of life.

To this idealistic view of history and civilization the Italian Neo-Scholastics now oppose their conception that all history resolves itself into an affirmation of the metaphysical principles of the School oscillating, according to the periods, between the interests implied in the Scholastic concepts of abstraction and concreteness. In modern history it is

[57] Cfr. his *Logica* (Bari, 1920), p. 146.

especially the latter interest that prevails. In the aspiration to concreteness in the Scholastic sense, the Italian Neo-Scholastics see the most marked tendency of modern life. In other words, it is the triumph of the metaphysic of being which the Italian Neo-Scholastics discern in the entire history of human speculation and civilization. In order to establish all this they have accepted, as I said, the method which in modern times has found special favor with their adversaries; they have devoted themselves to rethinking history, particularly modern history, so as to discover therein the truer and deeper meaning latent in anti-Scholastic systems. As the idealists have attempted an idealistic demonstration of the philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas, so the Neo-Scholastics purpose to attempt a Scholastic demonstration of the philosophy of Immanuel Kant. But to the keen observer it is evident that in works of this kind we cannot properly speak of a *demonstration,* but merely of an *interpretation.* Thus, not only did Giovanni Gentile not claim to reduce Thomistic doctrines to his monism,[58] and Agostino Gemelli to reduce Kantian doctrines to Scholasticism, [59] but in presenting his own interpretation of

[58] Cfr. *I problemi della Scolastica e il pensiero italiano,* (Bari, 1913).

[59] Cfr. *Immanuel Kant* (1724–1924), *Volume commemorativo del secondo centenario della nascita.* A cura del P. Agostino Gemelli, O.F.M. (Milan, 1924).

the opposite system, neither the one nor the other pretended to have given at the same time the convincing logical proof of the truth of his own metaphysics as compared with the metaphysics of his opponent. The process by which we examine a system with a view to determining its historical significance may be described as a process *distinct* from the other one by which we judge that system to be true or false. However, not all may agree to grant this distinction. Are not facts themselves eloquent, some may ask, and is not our knowledge wholly a knowledge of facts, and hence should not an accurate examination of these facts prove capable of correcting the theoretical presuppositions of anti-Scholastic systems? In all likelihood, then, it is on the historical terrain, and there alone, that the metaphysical problem should be discussed.

To this observation I reply by readily granting my inability to withdraw my knowledge from its dependence on facts, and that for reasons here repeatedly adduced. But on the other hand, I would also emphasize that I cannot identify the fact with the knowledge of the fact, or history with metaphysics; and this not only for the reason obvious to every Scholastic, namely, that fact and truth are not convertible (*factum et verum non convertuntur*), but also for another, more profound reason. In order to grasp the historical significance of a system,

I am not only constrained for the most part to transcend that system, to go beyond the words of the philosophers, as in the case of modern anti-Scholastic speculation; but the knowledge of facts obtained in this manner, while quite legitimate as a method and one whose possession and pursuit is necessary, is nevertheless destined to be a scientifically relative knowledge, inasmuch as the fact is immeasurably richer than our thought. The conformity between the intellect and the thing—especially when that thing is history, that is, the complexity of human facts—is always far from perfect. The thought of God alone corresponds adequately to its object.

Therefore, while I deem the efforts of Olgiati most commendable and stimulating in view of the actual needs of Scholastic thought, yet, because of this relativity of our knowledge, it would not surprise me if some day a man of genius should challenge the results of his researches.

Besides, if we consider more attentively that in part thought also lives an independent life, a life which for strong reasons must be called exclusively its own, the life that concerns the organization of ideas, in a word, the logical life, which is an essential part of scientific life; if we bear in mind that logical and metaphysical contrasts are the first to rise and engage our interest directly after the first

examination of the fact, even in the eventuality of their imperfect historical correspondence; if we reflect that the standpoints themselves of our mind always remain our very own and hence must needs command our interest; if we recall that it is only in the logical world that we can reach conclusive and profitable results also about that historical reality of which our intellect is not a degenerate offspring,— if we consider all this, we shall be well on our guard against casting uncalled for discredit on those Scholastic thinkers who continue to penetrate more deeply into the idealistic difficulty, and seek to solve it without being overmuch preoccupied with directly determining the new historical significance announced.

Let us repeat: the direction represented by the young school of Gemelli does not, in my opinion, tend to annul, but simply to continue the direction taken by the school of Cardinal Mercier. Nor can it be said that as such it had its origin in a desire completely to supplant the latter. Also to-day, when it proves no longer possible to limit ourselves to the simple course once outlined by Louvain without inviting reproach, the two directions accomplish the task of a practical division of labor and answer the ever contingent needs in which our acquisition of knowledge is destined to exert itself, historically

always oscillating between the danger of doing homage to the ultra-metaphysical idol and that of bending the knee before the anti-metaphysical idol. The continuation of the two directions will constitute a useful corrective against the excesses to which the one and the other is quite naturally inclined to abandon itself.

Let us, then, not stray from the course of the Louvain school. It must be pointed out, however, that also here the work of the Scholastics has hitherto been feeble and unconnected, so much so that the day when it will be possible to announce conclusive results seems still far off.[60] Let us not forget that after Kant speculation no longer succeeded in affirming the object except as a reduplication of the subject: the problem whether our knowledge is truly objective or not, is still there to command the attention of all. Unknown to antiquity in the terms in which it actually presents itself, this problem has become the fulcrum on which the efforts of thought have been centered for more than four centuries.

[60] I know no works more remarkable than Mercier's *Critériologie; De Cognitione Sensuum Externorum,* by Gredt (Rome, 1913); *Réflexions sur l'intelligence et sur sa vie propre,* by Maritain (Paris, 1924); *La gnoseologia dell' atto come fondamento della filosofia dell' essere,* by G. Zamboni, who continues to work unremittingly in the *Rivista di Filosofia Neo-Scolastica,* as the editor of the bulletin of gnoseology.

It has become the problem *par excellence* of philosophy, and therefore pre-eminently the problem of Scholastic philosophy.[61]

[61] P. Gény likewise recognizes this fact: "Modern mentality shrinks from any static conception of philosophic truth; to believe that a system conceived over two thousand years ago should be able to satisfy the intelligence of to-day and to offer solid bases for a construction answering the needs of our times, looks like an absurdity to most. But is it really absurd? In so many other branches of culture the Greeks are still our masters; could they not be such also in philosophy? Is it necessary for every philosopher, not only to rethink philosophy, but likewise to reconstruct it differently from his predecessors? Is it reasonable to liken philosophy to a work of art, which has strictly personal value, is indelibly stamped with the name of its author, and may never again be repeated, but only imitated? Is it perhaps not true that the human mind is identically constituted in all men? Do not the same laws, the same principles, the same demonstrations hold good for all?"

"Here, it seems to me, we touch the outstanding difficulty made against the efforts of the Scholastics to have their philosophy accepted. This difficulty is further re-enforced by the conviction, very widespread among philosophers to-day, that we cannot know things as they are in themselves, but only the phenomena which,—mayhap under the influence of an external reality,—our mind produces within itself. Knowledge, it is averred, is immanent, that is to say, it is entirely achieved within the thinking subject, and for this reason cannot lay hold of an external reality; at most, the mind can infer the existence of such a reality, conjecture its main outlines, but nothing more. *The great philosophical problem, then, is the critical problem.* Now Scholasticism either passes this problem by, or solves it hastily by an appeal to evidence, and without further ado intrepidly penetrates into the domain of absolute

being and constructs an ontological physic and metaphysic: how is it possible to grant it this pretension?

"I shall state my opinion frankly: *I believe that the Scholastics have not yet answered this difficulty with sufficient force.* Not that there exists or should exist for them any real doubt as to the certainty of their position; but its legitimacy should be established more effectively."—In Zybura, *op. cit.*, pp. 168–169 (Italics mine).

THE END

INDEX

Abélard, 29
Absolute, The, 4 sq., 96, 120, 129, 130
Abstract, Tendency toward the in St. Augustine and the thought of the Middle Ages, 24
Abstraction, 147, 149 sqq., 156 sq.
Abstractionism, 157
Adaptation, xxvii
Aegidius Romanus, 32, 37, 39, 49, 50, 52, 62, 75, 76, 77, 82, 88, 89
Aeterni Patris, Encyclical of Leo XIII, ix sq., xxiii, 3, 127, 161. See Leo XIII
Albert the Great, xiii, xxiv, 15, 29, 31
Alcuin, 17
Alexander of Hales, 33
Alexandria, School of, 19
Al-Gazali, 18
Anselm, St., 26, 53, 101
Anti-historical mentality of many Scholastics, The, 93 sqq., 107, 129 sq., 137 sq., 164 sq.
Anti-Scholastic systems of philosophy, Catholic attitude towards, 113, 127 sq., 140
Archives de Philosophie, 116
Aristotelianism of the Schoolmen, 15 sqq., 32 sqq., 37, 42, 64, 77, 99; Historical sense of, 100 sqq.; Thomastic, 111; Scholastic, 135, 138, 141, 147 sq.
Aristotle, v, xii, xviii, xxv, 22, 34, 38, 42, 44, 65, 95, 101, 116, 129, 130, 137, 138, 144, 147, 169
Arnobius, 16, 19
Assent of faith, 55 sq., 83
Assimilation, xxvii sq.
Augustine, St., On faith and reason, 19, 20 sq.; Platonism of, 21; Tendency toward the abstract, 24; His essentially theological method, 38; Exemplarism of, 77 sq.; On knowing *vs.* willing and loving, 89; Contemplates the world *sub specie aeternitatis,* 101 sq.; Construes abyss between the City of God and the world, 103; Master of the Middle Ages, 111 sq.; Was not infallible, 114
Augustinianism, 28
Authority, Argument from, 38
Averroës, xxiv, 16, 18
Averroism, Latin, 26, 30
Avicenna, xxiv, 16, 18

Bacon, Francis, 6, 106, 139 sq.
Bacon, Roger, 139 sq.
Baeumker, xv
Bandas, R. G., 9
Bates, E. S., xx
Beatitude, 47 sq., 76
Bede, Ven., 17
Being, Plato on the concept of, 22
Bergson, 157
Bernard, St., 17
Blessed, Science of the, 75 sqq.
Bonaventure, St., 26, 33
Brehier, E., 19
Bruni, G., x
Bruno, ix, 146, 162
Brute, 85

Campanella, 146
Cathedrals, 109
Certitude of faith, 55
Chiocchetti, 130, 142, 156, 158
Christian Social party, 4
Civilization, Continuity of medieval and modern, 122
Compendium Theoligicae Veritatis, 87 sq.
Concreteness, 11, 71, 72, 140, 148 sqq., 154, 155 sqq., 170
Continuity of historical development, 107, 162; Of Scholastic philosophy, 121 sqq.
Creatures, Diverse participation of, in the divine Essence, 74 sqq., 101
Croce, B., 14, 130, 158, 170
Crusades, 44
Culture, Philosophy and modern, xvi sq.

Decadence of Scholasticism, 97 sqq., 107 sq., 122 sq., 137
Denifle, xv
Descartes, xxiv, 114, 157
Descoqs, P., 116, 117, 118, 120
Dewey, xx sq.
De Wulf, M., 29, 31, 34, 70 sqq., 93, 122, 137
Dogma, 4 sq., 25, 40, 45, 62, 64
Double truth theory, 6 sq., 28, 56 sq.
Dualism, Scholastic, 9; Platonic, 23, 99 sq.; Aristotelian, 141

Eclecticism in philosophy, 120 sq.
Ehrle, F., xv, 33, 42, 97, 113, 115, 118, 119, 120, 161
El-Farabi, 18
El-Kindi, 18
Endres, M., 29
Epicurus, 146
Essence, Participation of creatures in the divine, 74 sqq.
Ethics, Platonic, 24

Faith, And reason, St. Augustine on the relation between, 19; The problem in the Middle Ages, 20 sqq., 25 sq.; 36 sqq.; Extrinsic and intrinsic character of, 50 sqq.; Nature of the act of, 53 sqq.; Preambles of, 61; And logic, 61 sqq.; Perfects hu-

man nature, 67 sqq.; Humaneness of the act of faith, 83 sq.; Nature of, 86 sq.; Human value of, 90 sqq.
Fichte, 157
Fides quaerens intellectum, 46, 59, 65
Form, 147 sq.
Free will and grace, 49 sq.; And the denial of God, 132

Gemelli, A., 3, 145, 158, 168, 171 sq., 174
Gentile, G., 14, 17, 60, 70 sqq., 92, 93, 100, 110, 135, 137, 158, 171 sq.
Gény, 128, 143, 176
Gilson, E., vii, 16, 26, 43, 142
Gnoseology, 175
God, Science of, 75 sq.
Grabmann, M., On Scholasticism as the *philosophia perennis*, viii, xiv, 131
Grace, 21; Nature the foundation of, 46 sqq.; Cannot be merited, 48 sq.; How attained, 49 sq.; Continuity between nature and, 79 sqq.; Perfects nature, 87
Gregory IX, 42 sq.

Hegel and Hegelianism, xxiv, 14, 135 sq., 157, 170
Heitz, 29, 82
Hellenism, 16
Henry of Ghent, 34, 52, 57, 58, 59, 73
Heraclitus, 137
Historical problem, Scholasticism and the, 93 sqq., 127 sqq., 129 sqq., 145 sq.
History, 99 sq., 106, 107, 108 sq., 112, 125, 130, 132 sq., 134, 136, 137, 152, 157, 158, 161 sqq.
History of philosophy, 13, 158 sq., 163
Honoratus of Autun, 17
Humanism, 12, 105, 106, 155, 159, 164
Hume, 157

Iamblicus, 23
Idea, History as a manifestation of the, 166
Ideas, Separated, of Plato, 22 sqq., 44, 95
Idol, The anti-metaphysical, 160 sqq.
Immanence, 146, 153, 154
Immanentism, 11, 12, 156 sqq., 176
Individual, The, in Plato's philosophy, 23
Intellect, xxxiii; And reason, 82 sqq.
Intellectus quaerens fidem, 46, 65
Intelligence, 79 sq.
International Thomistic Congress, First, 143

Jacopone da Todi, 17
Judaism, 15, 16, 18 sq.

Kaiser, 29
Kant, xxiv, xxx, 157, 159, 171, 175

Knowledge, The act of faith essentially consists in, 51

La Via, V., 1
Leibniz, V, xxiv
Leo XIII, 3, 115, 123, 127 sq.
Lessius, ix
Liberty, 5
Life, Of the Renaissance, 104 sq.; Of Neo-Scholasticism, vi
Locke, 157
Longwell, x, xxx, 107
Louvain, School of, 2, 3, 161 174, 175
Lowell, xxi
Lucca, Tolomeo da, 144
Lucretius, 146

"Magister Sententiarum," 17
Mahien, M. L., 116
Mandonnet, 26
Manegold of Lautenbach, 16
Materialism, 139
Maréchal, 142
Maritain, 142, 175
Masnovo, A., 144
Mattiussi, G., 115, 159
Mentality, The anti-historical, 93 sqq.
Mercier, D., 174, 175
Merit, Supernatural, 48 sqq.
Messenger, E. C., 31
Method, The historical, 160 sq.
Middle Ages, 7, 10, 11, 16, 20 sqq., 109, 121, 138, 154, 164
Modernity, 142 sqq.
Mohammedanism, 15, 16, 18
Monism, 9, 100
Monopoly, 104
Motives for believing, 80
Mystics, 18, 44

Naddeo, P., 153, 154
Nature the foundation of grace, 46 sqq.; Continuity between grace and, 79 sqq.
Neo-Platonism, 24 sqq., 112
Neo-Scholasticism, No revival of the dead, 110; Does not consist in a simple return to St. Thomas, 114; And the reconsecration of modern philosophy and civilization, 125; How far Thomistic, 126 sq.; Programme of, according to Olgiati, 140, 149; In Italy, 158 sqq.
Nominalism, 114, 119, 148

Olgiati, F., 61, 133, 140, 145, 146, 147, 148, 151, 153, 154, 155, 156, 159, 160, 169 sq., 173
Optimism, 132
Order, Natural and supernatural, 47 sqq.; 57 sqq.
Otloh of St. Emmeram, 16
Otto of Cluny, 17
Otto of Tournai, 17

Parmenides, 23, 137
Pathfinders, 5
Paulinus of Aquileia, 17
Peripateticism of the 13th century, 111

Peter Damian, 16
Peter Lombard, 17
Philo, 18 sq.
Philonism, 19
Philosophia perennis, iv, sqq., xvi, xxvi, 131, 135, 166
Philosophy, And dogma, 4 sq.; Is also anthropology and ethics, 5; Charges against, 6 sqq.; The new, 6; Its relation to theology, 6, 8 sqq., 103; Problem of modern Scholastic, 14; Freedom of, 20; Its independence from theology, 30 sqq.; Ancillary function of, 60 sq., 68; Imminent in theology, 91 sq.; The task performed by systems, 111 sqq.; The eclectic process in, 120 sqq.; The concept of an immobile philosophy is anti-Scholastic, 135; Relations between history and, 159 sq.; Reduces itself to history, 162 sq.; Historical significance of modern, 169 sqq.
Physics, 139
Picavet, 139
Plato, xxiv, 21 sqq., 24 sq., 95, 101, 129, 137, 138, 141, 147
Platonism, 8, 14, 18, 21 sqq., 24 sq.
Plotinus, 23
Politics, 4
Porphyry, 23
Preambles of faith, 61
Progress, xxv, 104, 130
Protestantism, ix
Providence, 133
Rationalism of Scotus Eriugena and Siger of Brabant, 26 sq.; Of the Renaissance, 105
Rationes aeternae, 101
Reason, And revelation, 61 sqq.; Intellect and, 82 sqq.
Redemption, 58
Religion, 10
Renaissance, 6, 7, 12, 45, 70, 104 sq., 106, 139, 155, 159, 164
Renascence of Scholasticism, 2 sq.
Revelation, 36, 45, 46, 61 sqq., 81 sq.
Rousselot, 142
Ruggiero, G. de, 1
Rupert of Deutz, 17
Ryan, J. H., xi

Salvianus of Marseilles, 20
Sanseverino, 3
Scepticism, 64
Scholasticism, Charges against, x sq., 7 sqq.; By what means the new S. strives to realize its ideals, xii sqq.; Is a philosophy, 12; Crisis of, 12 sq.; The problem it has to face, 14 sqq.; And the historic problem, 93 sqq.; Opinions on the causes of decadence of, 97 sqq., 107 sq., 122; Decline of at the opening of the 15th century, 109 sq.; Did not come to a standstill with St. Thomas, 113; Under what condition it can be of

value to modern times, 119; Future of, 124 sq.; Historical viewpoint of, 127 sqq.; The Leonine revival, 127 sq.; As the *philosophia perennis,* 131; Eclecticism of, 132; Real distinction between it and Scholastics, 134; Its fortunes linked with the work of all philosophers, 134; Vitality of, 134 sqq.; And the critical problem, 176 sq.
Science and philosophy, xviii sqq.
Scotus, Duns, xiii
Scotus Eriugena, 26, 27
Sertillanges, 58, 74, 142, 145
Sheldon, xxx
Siger of Brabant, 26, 27, 28
Spearman, E., xxxiv
Spinoza, xxiv
State, The, 103, 105
Suarez, ix, 116 sqq., 121
Summa contra Gentiles, 46, 143 sq.
Summae, 109
Supernatural, Nature and the, 47 sq.
Syndicalism, 4
Synthesis, Need of a philosophic, xxii; Scholastic, of the future, 105 sq., 124 sqq.
Systems of philosophy, 111 sqq.

Talamo, S., 3
Tatian, 16, 19
Taylor, A. E., 114
Telesius, ix
Tertullian, 16, 19
Theology, in its relation to philosophy, 6, 8 sqq.; Has nothing to do with the problem of present-day Scholasticism to place itself abreast of modern progress, 14; Contact with philosophy, 41; Speculative character of, 52; As the science of being, 52; Its position among the sciences, 57 sqq.; Throws light upon philosophy, 66 sq.; Theology as philosophy, 69 sqq.; As philosophy, 69 sqq.; Certainty of, 88 sq.; More speculative than practical, 89; On history as *filia aeternitatis,* 102
Theses, The famous twenty-four, 115
Thirteenth century, Philosophic maturity of, 36 sqq.; The new mentality beginning with the, 103 sqq., 134
Thomas Aquinas, St.; The first of modern philosophers, vii; as an interpreter of Aristotle, xii; Universal and synthetic genius of, xxiii; On the proper attitude towards the thinkers of the past, xxiv sq.; Condition of philosophy in his time, 15 sq.; Attacked by the mystics, 18; Against Siger of Brabant, 27; On the problem of faith and reason,

29; Shook medieval thought out of its torpor, 31; The novelty of, 41 sqq.; His a real and true system of philosophy, 45; On revelation as a demonstrable fact, 46; Object of the *Summa contra Gentiles*, 46 sq.; On faith, 51; Emphasizes the speculative character of theology, 52; On the nature of the act of faith, 53 sqq.; On the eternity of the world, 63; On a certain imperfection of faith, 68 sq.; His philosophical theology, 71 sq.; His exemplarism, 78; His epistemology as compared with that of St. Augustine, 78 sq.; On certitude in matters of faith, 82 sqq.; On man's participation in God by means of the intellect, 86 sq., 101; On the science of nature, 103; Peripatetic direction of his philosophy, 112; Sources of Thomistic speculation, 111 sq.; Scholasticism did not come to a standstill with St. Thomas, 113; He was not infallible, 114; Suarez on, 116 sq.; Progressive spirit of, 117; How he reached the heights of his synthesis, 118 sq.; Eclecticism of, 120 sq.; The new Scholasticism entails a certain abandonment of the system of St. Thomas, 125; But not of its soul, which is immortal, 124 sq.; On God as the cause and end of every operation, 133; Modernity of, 143; Founder of the new Scholastic science, 144; Methodological tradition of, 161; Human thought did not come to a standstill with, 167

Thomists, 111 sq.

Tocco, G. di, 44

Tradition, Function of, 117

Transcendence, 153, 154

Trendelenburg, A., iv sq.

Trinity, Dogma of the, 26

Truc, G., xxxiv

Truth, and a system of truth, Distinction between, 106 sqq.; As a science, comes to us by means of philosophy, 111; The life of all, 133; Definition of, 173

Truths, Philosophical and theological, 6 sq., 28, 56 sq.

Universals, 150 sqq.

Vico, G. B., 95, 130, 159, 160

Vismara, S., 160

Walter of St. Victor, 17

"Weltweisheit," 12, 155

Windelband, W., 16, 19

Wright, 5

Zamboni, G., 175

Zybura, J.S., xl, 1, 31, 61, 107, 114, 119, 122, 128, 131, 140, 143, 147, 155, 159, 164, 168, 177

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